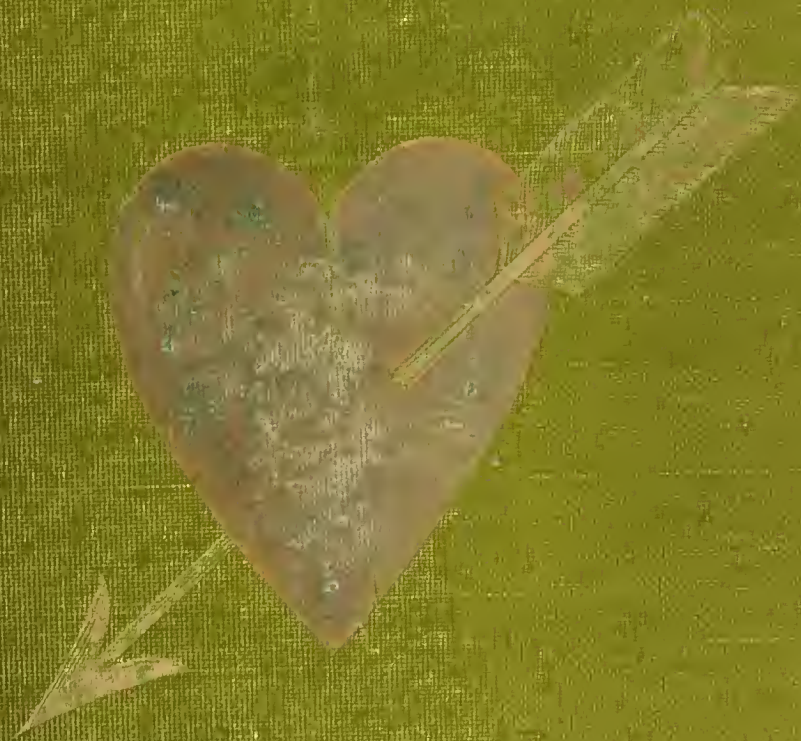


CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS



Olin
PR
6000
A1
C74
1908

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



GIFT OF
Professor
James Owen
Mahoney

THE
CONFESSIONS
OF A
PRINCESS



NEW YORK
C. H. DOSCHER & CO.



Copyright, 1908, by
C. H. DOSCHER

Publisher's Note

It is not often, perhaps, that a book like the *Confessions of a Princess* is issued in this country, and it may be that it will be read with varied feelings. But the publisher does not consider that any apology is needed for issuing it to the American public. The "Confessions" must be judged for what they are, and not for what they might be. It may be that they can claim to possess no particular "literary" or "artistic" value. But no one will be able to read them without perceiving that they afford a picture of self-revelation, and of Manners and Morals in High Places, which is curiously lifelike though perhaps not more edifying than, for example, the famous *Memoirs of the Count de Grammont*.



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

The Confessions of a Princess

Castle Mente,

June 17.

YESTERDAY, I got up again for the first time from my bed of sickness. Thank God, it is over. The Royal House of Menteburg ought to be very grateful. I have done everything that could be expected of me, and two weeks ago, I presented the Menteburgs and their most faithful subjects with a healthy little Prince. He is called Ulric, after the King, who was his sponsor. I should have liked him to be called, quite simply, Karl, after my father, whom I so long for and who was truly the only person I regretted at all when I came here from Kressnitz. But besides Ulric, my baby is called Johann, too, after my husband:—Ulric Johann Maximilian Eitel Conrad Karl Wolf August. I knew exactly from which important members of the House of Menteburg his names would be selected; and I daresay, if I think very carefully, I shall be able to remember them all. But at the present moment I don't take any interest in it at all, for I am alone; and moreover,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I am not allowed, in my ladies' company, and *par ordre* of my conscientious and obedient husband, to take any such matters seriously to heart.

I really am alone now with this Diary; and as I begin it, I am chiefly astonished at finding that the strongest desire I have, is for solitude. If things were as they should be, this would not be the case,—and, in fact, things are *not* as they should be. The right thing would be, for me to like best of all to be with my husband, or—since I cannot always have His Highness near me—at least with the Most Transparent, beloved family; and I ought not to have even an idea of seeking any outlet for my thoughts, except with my relations, and through that other intimate intercourse of prayer. But I can't help it. I am as I am, and I *do* want something else, though I don't know exactly what it is; and that is what makes me write in these pages things that I would give my life to dare to say openly—and that, since I don't dare to risk my life, must be known to no one else, on pain of death.

But it is difficult, to speak of all these things—much more difficult than I had imagined. It all escapes, so quickly, from under my pen. I ought to be much cleverer, or I ought to be able to write poetry, like lanky Countess Scholms. But if one has to pay for the poetic gift by being as ugly and scraggy, and as spiteful as the Scholms creature, I had much rather not have it, and just chatter away to myself about anything that comes into

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

my head. At any rate I shall amuse myself; and far more so than when my ladies, at tea, tell me silly stories about Capuchins and Ursulines, and orphan-children and ballet-dancers. And perhaps by this means I shall find out what it is I really want, and get to know something about myself. A quaint idea! to sit down and write letters to oneself! It reminds me of the famous passage:—"Two souls, alas! dwell in my breast"*—by Schiller, I think. I like it very much, for certainly two souls dwell in my breast, and I don't even know whether my Better Self will be writing these letters to my Worser Self, or my Worser Self to my Better. Probably it will be a case of see-saw, and these two famous "souls," which "dwell in my breast," will enter into correspondence with one another in these letters.

To begin with, I call my baby Karl, and say "Karli" to him, when nobody can hear. And when old Bredenbach declares: "His Highness Prince Ulric will now do this or that,"—I really, at first, don't know whom she is talking about. I wanted very much to nurse my baby myself, but my husband looked at me in such amazement when I suggested it, that I gave up the idea at once. All the more because he observed, after some time, that we should have first to obtain the Royal Permission. He never does answer until after some time; and it bores me so, for he very seldom has

* "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust" . . .

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

anything witty or interesting to say. This is how it was when I spoke about the nursing:—

First he took a long time to realize the fact that “he must ask the King;” then, after another long pause, something further occurred to him, and he said: “You know, there’s this about nursing . . . it might spoil your figure. . . .” I got tired of the subject and wanted to talk of something else, but he kept on mooning about it, and, after a fresh pause, he brought out: “Do you know, I shouldn’t like it, either. . . . The doctors would have to be consulted . . . and I don’t want anybody to go pulling you about.” I felt indignant at this expression, and at the whole thing, as he represented it. Johann is dreadful in that way—he always uses the coarsest words for everything, and expresses himself so roughly that one literally does feel “pulled about” by his conversation. He has a really frightful phrase just now, which he considers a dazzling witticism, and so he is forever bringing it in. He is so proud of it that yesterday, when Eric and his wife were visiting me, he actually introduced it into the talk. Now we are not by any means intimate with Eric; and his wife, Mathilde, intrigues against us with the King, I know, as she only can. So I was furious, and turned red to the roots of my hair. Eric behaved splendidly; he went to the window, and began to talk about the Castle-Guard; but Mathilde looked at me maliciously, and Johann was the only one who laughed at the famous joke. So I’m at a sort of crisis of my

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

discontent. I have been married for a year, and my husband did, when he came as a wooer to our home at Kressnitz, quite genuinely please me. He is attentive, amiable, impassioned, and in this respect I am far better off than another Princess, who had to be married at twenty to a man who didn't want her, and whom *she* didn't want, either. But my husband is—I don't know how to express it—is so obvious, both in words and deeds. I wasn't accustomed to this robust sort of treatment at home; in my girlish dreams I had imagined a greater gentleness and tenderness. . . . I must say that it was a great disillusionment to me to find that married life was so commonplace, somehow; and I never thought that love consisted of such coarse, material sort of actions. Ever since our wedding I've struggled in vain against his roughness, against the indecorum of his whole behaviour, and against the boundless freedom of his conversation. Up to to-day it hasn't done much good, but perhaps things may improve now.

On the fifth day after my baby was born the King paid me a visit. This time he was a little bit more polite, more polished, and I think he might be a very agreeable man, if he could only manage to smile now and then, and if one were permitted to make a joke in his presence. Goodness! I always do so long, when he's there, and I'm talking to him, to say some quaint, witty thing right in his face, and make him laugh out loud. But I restrain myself, and, up to the present, no such scan-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

dal has taken place. What his private opinion of me is, or how he regards me in any way, is totally unknown to me. Even my husband is not quite sure whether he is in favor or not; is frightened to death of him, and never does anything at all without "wondering what the King will say about it." Lately he told me that the King, a little while ago, sent for Eric, and asked him why he so rarely lived with his wife. And Eric had to promise that he would be a better husband from that time forward. When I think of it, Johann ought not to have told me this, for I *might* begin to think that his own attentions were only the result of his fear of the Lord and Master. But, after all, that's not likely, for, in the first place, I am not so very anxious for his attentions; and, in the second, the King is much more likely, if he does send for Johann, to order him to be more restrained in his behavior.

Well, as I said, the King was with me, was very gracious, and wished me happiness. When he was going away, he even kissed my forehead, which he hasn't done since I came to the Royal Residence, Ebenstadt, at the time of my marriage. And since, he has inquired for me every day; and I hear that Professor Rodl, who was present when the baby was born, is to be made a Councillor. I've also heard that I am to have a regiment, all to myself, as soon as I go over to the Residence with the little one. Of the other relations, the Most Reverend Cousin Moritz has come to see me. But I made

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

short work of *him*. . . . In he comes, most sanctimoniously, and sits down beside my bed with folded hands, and proposes to edify me, as he says. He "hopes it will be agreeable to me to hear a devout address, and that I will trustfully open my heart to him, not as to my cousin, but as to a priest." I have quite as much as I can do with in that way in the shape of worthy Father Swoboda (whom they've given me as Confessor), and our fat Court-preacher, and I am perfectly determined not to make dear Cousin Moritz the pastor of my soul. He floundered on for ever so long, and at last I interrupted him and said suddenly: "What I'm most glad of, is that at last I can go to an operetta again."

He looked daggers at me, but was absolutely speechless. And I couldn't help laughing, for there is a rumor that the pretty soubrette, Theresa Mayer, who sings in the *The Geisha*, is more than spiritually dear to him! But naturally this gentleman has a knack of evasion. He remarked that he looked forward to the time when I should accept his comfort and exhortation; then rose, gave me his blessing, and with the dignity of a true Menteburg, left the room. When he was gone, I felt rather unhappy, for dear Moritz is of course in high favor with the King and Queen, and is one of the best intriguers that I have ever come across. Pooh! what does it matter? I suppose I've done myself some more harm. It won't be the last time; and I can't help it, more's the pity.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Why! there was the Queen, too—upon my word, I had almost forgotten her. And yet, she is much the nicest of them all to me; she's an unhappy person, frightened and shy, and never dares to utter a word when His Majesty is by. She has been three times, and I found her unusually sympathetic, for she played and laughed quite sweetly with the baby. I know quite well now though, why I can't really like the Queen. She's always so dismal, and always has a red tip to her nose, as if she'd been crying, and she looks at one with mournful, miserable eyes—like this! I am still too young, and unfortunately ever so much too natural to be able to stand it.

People like that make me cross; I never know what to say to them; I always feel that I must hide my own cheerfulness, and in fact let myself be far too much influenced by them. If I only had a little more patience, and could take an interest in the melancholy of these sort of people, I might now be very good friends with the Queen. But, perhaps, that will be all right too, when I am back at Ebenstadt.

Castle Mente,

June 23.

I THINK I should like to write a little account of my childhood, now that I have a little child of my own, and shall probably begin to think more and more of the old home-days. At least that was how it was during the first fortnight of my confinement. I delighted in thinking of Kressnitz; and a lot of things there became clear to me which I had never understood before. I see now that one must be married one's-self before one can understand anything about the married life of other people.

Of course I knew quite well that it was a piece of luck for me to marry Prince Johann. We at home are needy, poor devils enough; what good does it do Papa to bear the title of Sovereign Lord, when he has no kingdom and does not really reign? Probably he would be a happy, natural man, straightforward and kind, if he had his nice little throne still, and not merely the title alone. He never speaks of it. But since I have been here, in a not only "Sovereign," but genuinely reigning House, I can quite well understand why Papa is always so peevish when he thinks of all he ought

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

to have. He has to live very plainly, and so he does not like going into society. Of course, he keeps up a kind of Court in Kressnitz, and sees a certain number of people. But when I say, "going into society," I mean of course among his equals. That is why he hasn't been to see me once since I came here. And that is why he is so irritable, and so ready to resent any little blunder. Good Heavens! I have seen clearly now, too, for a long time, how worried poor Papa must be about money. And I can't say he has been exceptionally fortunate in his married life. Mamma is serious and perhaps a wee bit too pious. How we children suffered from that piety of hers! I remember how horrible it seemed to me and my sister Melitta, to have to get up every morning at five o'clock, and be at prayer in the Chapel by six. Particularly in winter, while it was still pitch-dark and the flagstones were so cold! What good did it do Mamma? Nothing could have made us really religious, and in the end we used simply, without any qualms of conscience, to read story-books during morning-service. That was a very clever arrangement of mine! We used to tear out a handful of pages from the story-books, put them inside our prayer-books, and then bury ourselves in our reading all through the time in Chapel, which went by much quicker then! It was rather a strain though, for one had to be very careful not to get found out, and besides it was very hard to read by the dim light of the tapers. If Mamma had ever come to

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

know of it, she would have half-killed us, I believe; it was not a pleasant thing at any time to get a box on the ear from Mamma. My dear brother, Karl Joseph, once, at table, imitated Father Schnabel, our religious teacher, who always used to snort and smack his lips when he was eating, in a way that made us feel quite ill. But Mamma gave Karl Joseph one—and the blood flowed all over his cheek. She does not hit with the palm of her hand, but with the back, so that the big rings she wears make it hurt twice as much. Papa was very angry that time, though; he got up and said that as Sovereign Lord and Master of the Family he reserved the right of giving such punishments to himself. Mamma of course began to cry, for she always does whenever Papa says a word to her—and then, she launched forth, and said she was the only one who kept us from ruination, and if she were not there, with her example, and her daily fervent prayers for us all, we should long since have been irretrievably lost. Well! we certainly had our cross in the shape of the famous Father Schnabel. I can most decidedly say that it was he who spoilt all my pleasure in religion, long before the little drama occurred in connection with him, which I shall shortly relate, if I don't find the recalling of it too painful. His manner with Mamma was so servile, and he treated us children with such calculated ill-will that we all bitterly hated him.

Karl Joseph, who always was a sharp little fellow, once played a splendid trick on him. Karl

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Joseph, for the hundredth time, didn't know his lesson, and Father Schnabel wanted to make him read, on his knees, ten times in succession, the particular portions of the Catechism which referred to the case. Of course Karl Joseph said, "I won't." Then Schnabel says very sweetly, "Your Royal Highness will do at once what I command you." His Royal Highness, on the contrary, flies into a rage, and says, "I'll kneel only before the Altar, and if I *must*, before His Majesty." "No," says Schnabel, "Your Highness will kneel before me, because I order you to do so, for your Highness is a good Christian, and will make this example of humility without delay." "I will *not*," says Karl Joseph; "if I choose, I'll kneel before every door-keeper and stable-boy in the place; but I won't kneel before you." They went on like this for a long time, till at last Schnabel lost patience, and warned my brother that he would go to Mamma and tell her, and that then Karl wouldn't be allowed to ride for a whole month. Karl was then twelve, and a very wild boy. He was very much afraid of Mamma, and riding was his only real pleasure. So she had always threatened him with not being allowed to get on a horse, and his punishment had always been to be forbidden Riding-school. So no sooner does Karl Joseph hear that it is once more to be a question of cutting off his riding, than he rushes to the window, flings it open, and out with him, like lightning! Father Schnabel was in a mortal fright, for the school-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

room at Castle Kressnitz is three stories high. But Karl Joseph had only slipped out, and then hidden near the window on the parapet, leaning up against the wall. How it came into his head to do it, he himself doesn't know. Well! Father Schnabel carefully stretched his neck out of the window, fully persuaded that he should see my brother in a thousand pieces underneath. Then they parleyed—Schnabel still in a great fright, for it looked very dangerous, and, as he said afterwards, he was dreadfully afraid that the old masonry might loosen under Karl's feet, and the whole parapet crash down with him on top of it. Karl Joseph said, "I won't come in, unless every punishment is 'off.'" Father Schnabel promised at last, for besides all the rest, it was winter and bitterly cold. "And I won't come in," pursued Karl Joseph, "unless you promise not to say a word to Mamma about it." In his fright the Father promised that too. Then Karl Joseph, the slyboots that he was, made him swear all this by a solemn oath—and so at last crept back into the room. But Schnabel was so ill after the fright that he had to cut short the lesson-hour and go up to his own room. Karl Joseph is always making scenes of that sort. Unfortunately he is just as imprudent and outspoken as I am; he can't keep back his opinions, and so he gets on rather badly now at the Court of Memling. He and Mamma don't agree very well, and I don't think they ever will. The first open breach was at the time of that little drama between Father

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Schnabel and myself, when Karl Joseph took my part. I was fifteen then, and my brother was seventeen.

The thing began a couple of weeks before Easter, and therefore shortly before Karl Joseph and my youngest brother, Eberhardt Wolf, came to us at Kressnitz on vacation from the Military Academy. During Lent, Father Schnabel had been singularly amiable to me, all of a sudden. He altered his demeanor, was most indulgent, let me do as I liked, and was endlessly patient when I didn't know my lessons. At the same time he began playing tricks with his hands, but at first I had no idea of what he was driving at. But when at last he touched my knee under the table with his hand I did get frightened, and was always in a tremor then when the hour for his lesson arrived. He went on with his caresses, got more and more enterprising and bold, and at last I didn't know what to do, except to beg Mamma not to leave me any longer with Schnabel during my lesson, but to let Fräulein von Trisburg be with me. Upon this, Mamma gave me a box on the ear, and was terribly angry. She said I was a slandering, wicked girl; that I was committing a great sin in traducing so holy a man as Father Schnabel, and that I should never succeed in getting her to offer him such an insult as to show the least want of confidence in him by letting von Trisburg sit in the room with us. Well, I could do nothing then but help myself. But I wasn't very fit for that, for the

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

thing made me too furious. I thought of appealing to Papa, who was not nearly so devoted to Schnabel as Mamma was, and who would certainly have listened to me. But just then, my two brothers came home, and as, on the very day they came, I had to endure yet another disgusting scene with Schnabel, I could not help pouring out my troubles to Karl Joseph. He was half-mad with fury, and that instant he went with the story to Mamma. But she flew into another passion, declared that there wasn't a word of truth in my foolery, and that as a proof of her perfect confidence in Father Schnabel she would lock me in with him that day for my lesson. Karl Joseph and I were beside ourselves with indignation. When Schnabel arrived and I was brought into the room to him, Mamma actually did turn the key in the lock behind her. Instantly he came over to me, and I only saved myself by taking the lighted lamp from the table, holding it in my hand, and saying: "If you come three paces nearer, I'll throw the lamp in your face." On that, he stopped, quite confused, and stood beside the table, whispering all sorts of things to me that I didn't perfectly understand, but which enraged and offended me, and which, defenceless as I was, I had to listen to. When the "lesson" was over at last, and Schnabel left my room, he found standing outside in the corridor, Karl Joseph, armed with the big hunting-whip! He slashed Schnabel across the face with it, and drove him before him downstairs, and through the

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

passages, galleries, and corridors, to the Father's own room. None of the servants made the least attempt to hinder my brother; they were all delighted that this bad man should get his deserts at last. Karl Joseph overdid it rather badly, though. He was a young man, half-crazy with anger and wounded honor and pride, and he could not restrain himself. So he rushed right into Schnabel's room, shut the door behind him, and then fell upon his victim, until Schnabel fell down bleeding and half-dead.

Karl Joseph was as pale as a ghost when he came down stairs. We were all standing in the blue ante-chamber, and in the corridor outside all the servants were clustered, for the hubbub had alarmed the whole household. Only Papa was not there—he was not to come back till that evening. It was terrible. I shall never forget how Mamma fell upon poor Karl Joseph, and began to cuff him right and left. He was in uniform, and that made a still greater impression on us, for we could see how inexpressibly he was humiliated by it all. We all shrieked, but it made no difference; Mamma only hit the harder the more noise we made. During all the rest of his holidays Karl Joseph did not exchange a single word with Mamma. She did everything she could think of to make him beg her pardon—for when our ears were boxed we always had to beg pardon—but she tried in vain, for Karl Joseph only stood stock-still, looking at her, and said no more than if he had been deaf and dumb.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Papa, of course, was told the whole story that very evening. But I'm sure that he really was rather glad of it, for he didn't say a word to Karl Joseph, and never made any inquiries after Father Schnabel, although Mamma kept sending up to him every minute. Indeed, Papa went so far as to forbid Mamma to pay the Father a visit, as she had wanted to do; and he gave orders that Schnabel should be sent back to his monastery as soon as possible. But he must have been very bad, for it was a fortnight before they could take him away. Karl Joseph must have given him a terrible dressing. Finally they carted him off under cover of night and fog, and not one of us children ever saw him again. After that, though, Mamma and my brother never really got on together. And that was my little drama with Father Schnabel. He was, when I come to think of it, really my first admirer.

My second was undoubtedly Baron Turnotzi, of the Guards, for at that time he suddenly spoke of love to me without any preliminaries at all. We—that is, Mamma, Melitta, and I—were on a visit at the Royal Court in the capital of Memling, and at Castle Ortenburg (the country-château). We always used to have games of tennis at that time. I don't know why, but I have an idea that they were trying then to get me married. For all of a sudden the Macedonian Plenipotentiary began to circle round me incessantly; and then, all in a minute, there appeared a Macedonian Prince, who

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

came in the morning and went away in the evening—a little, thin creature, who didn't know a word of German, who looked like a Jew, and spoke the vulgarest French I ever heard. The King can't have approved of him, or there must have been some other obstacle—at all events, there was no further mention of His Macedonian Highness. So we stayed in Ortenburg a couple of pleasant weeks, and very often went into the town to buy things, for at Kressnitz we never as a rule either see anything or buy anything. And at Ortenburg, Turnotzi was "commanded" for tennis with us and every day we went on our bicycles to the grounds; and by the second day Melitta had confided to me that Princess Clementina was dying for love of Turnotzi. *I* didn't care about him though he was a handsome man, very tall, very slim, but too dark for my fancy. Clementina had long been married, and gone to Dalecarlia, and Heaven knows where Melitta, the goose, can have picked up such a story. Well, as we were coming back from tennis, Turnotzi was bicycling beside me, and Melitta was far in front. Suddenly he began to talk about love, and said quite boldly that he would wager I hadn't an idea what love really meant. Naturally this conversation amused me, and interested me too, because I was not used to such intercourse and felt in it all the glamor of the Thing Forbidden. But I didn't give myself away, and only answered that it was most natural that an officer of the Guards should know more about love than I did. There-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

upon Turnotzi offered to expound it to me, and when we were dismounting at the Castle, he said, "I should like to do it, but Her Royal Highness must give me express permission, and must graciously promise beforehand to forgive whatever I may say." Melitta came up just then, and of course said at once, "Yes; I give my permission; say whatever you like." So of course there was nothing for me to do but to give my permission also. And then Turnotzi began to stroke his mustache, and to say that the Emperor Napoleon had only publicly married the Archduchess Louise after some days' interval, when she came to him in France for the wedding. But he had been her husband from the very first, for he simply had not been able to wait until the ceremony was over. "*That* is love," he said, and looked at me. Melitta looked puzzled, and I, blank with astonishment as I was, absolutely did not know what to say. "And I know another instance," continued Turnotzi; "of Catherine the Second, who, when she was fifteen years old, saw a soldier of the Guards beneath her window, and simply let him lift her down from the window to the garden. . . . *That's* love." The story of the soldier of the Guards was plain enough. Melitta ran away; and I just left the Turnotzi gentleman *planté-là*.

When I consider seriously, these are my only adventures, and I never had another until the day that Prince Johann Ulric came to Kressnitz and asked for my hand in marriage.

Ebenstadt,

July 4.

WE are back at the Residence; came three days ago. A great reception had been actually planned, and the Parish Council of Ebenstadt (as I happen to know quite well) wanted to decorate the streets, as a welcome to me and my baby—in fact, everything was arranged. The Burgomaster was to be at the station, with white-robed maidens, and so forth. But it all fell through. The King would not allow it. Everything that anybody else might be pleased at is distasteful to him; and he has long been annoyed at my popularity in Ebenstadt. So he sent Count Quast to intimate to the Burgomaster that there was no necessity for receiving with ovations Princess Anastasia and her offspring. My confinement had been perfectly normal in every way, I had been in no danger—and so forth. Breidenbach told me the whole story. I really don't mind in the least—on the contrary, I am amused that the King should have taken so much trouble to intrigue against an insignificant personage like myself—and all the more am I amused, because it did him not the slightest good. Our entry was simply immense!

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

They were careful, I need not say, to arrange that I should not arrive in Ebenstadt until half-past five o'clock, although the journey only takes two hours, and my special train can always do the short distance in an hour-and-a-half. But this time it was simply made "impossible for me to have a train at noon or before it." At first I thought of giving up any idea of a special train, and going off instantly by the ordinary mail, which reaches Ebenstadt at one o'clock. But I needn't say my husband hadn't the pluck for that. The head-steward had informed him that my train would be ready at half-past three o'clock in Mentendorf station, and most probably this was by the King's orders. At first I was furious and upbraided Johann with being afraid to trust himself on a two-hours' railway journey without consulting the King; and then he pointed out to me that the mail did not stop at Mentendorf. But when I pointed out that we could always stop the express when we chose, he told me a long story of how brother Oscar lately wanted to go from his garrison in Strippendorf to the Capital, and had the Paris *train-de-luxe* stopped for him, and how he was forthwith commanded before the King and got a "talking to" for having disarranged "the world's traffic!" Now there surely is a difference between us and Oscar—at any rate, *I* think so; and am ready to maintain that such difference exists! *I*, coming back, after four months' absence to the Residence, with my new-born, first-born

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

son, and Mr. Oscar, a little Lieutenant, slipping off to Ebenstadt for a lark!

But I was sick of arguing about it, and I made up my mind to try once more, and then have done with it. I said to my husband that if we went by the ordinary train, like any ordinary folk, we should arrive like any ordinary folk—which would evidently please the King, who didn't wish us to make a public entry. No good! Johann explained that in the papers our arrival was announced for 5.30, and that we should have to encounter all sorts of difficulties if we tried to alter the arrangements.

I'm only sorry that I was vexed to no purpose, for Heaven knows, I was nearly ill with the whole silly business—and nearly suffocated, too, for of course I was not accorded the Daumont carriage, nor even an open two-horse one—no! The jealous Lord and Master, in his most gracious and tender solicitude for His Highness, the little Prince Ulric, sent a closed coupé to the station, so that by no means should the Ebenstadt folk see more than the tip of my nose, and so behave themselves nicely and coldly. And it had also been thought that at 5.30 in the afternoon there would not be so many people in the streets as there are at noon. In short, it was to be a quiet, tranquil Ascension!

But, to my great joy, the Ebenstadt people were *not* content with the tip of my nose, and neither did the business-hour hinder them from coming to meet me and wish me good-day! It was sim-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

ply splendid. The whole station square was crowded, and all along the road from the station to the Castle there were innumerable streams of people; all the windows were full, all the balconies lined, and the carriage was often obliged to stop. A great success! When I came out of the waiting-room a ringing cheer went up that could be heard over half the town! I did not deny myself the triumph, especially as I knew that it would all be reported with exactitude that very hour; and I remained, standing on the top step for some little time before I disappeared into the mouse-trap of a carriage. Indeed, I made Bredenbach (who stared at me in horror) give me little Ulric, and I held him up high, so that everyone could see him—and stood there in the storm of cheering, and I confess I felt very happy to think that the people loved me, and also to think how annoyed the King would be when he heard the story. My brave lord and husband, I need not say, had let all *his* courage tumble down into the bottom of his big cuirassier-boots, and kept whispering to me, "For God's sake, get in. . . . What are you doing?" But I didn't pay much attention to him. I made him my accomplice; he had to stand beside me, graciously smiling and bowing in all directions; and it was not until I considered that the ovation had lasted long enough to be beyond all question sincere, that I allowed myself to be put into the carriage. But I ordered the servants to go at walking pace. And the equerry, Murbach, who was standing by, was

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

so disconcerted, and my order was so peremptory, that he never got his wits together sufficiently to give a different order.

And so we drove through the town, I always with my face well out of the window and the baby beside me, so that everyone could see him who wanted to. My sweet little Ulric already stands up for me, for never once, all the way, did he leave me in the lurch, never cried or struggled, but gazed out, so solemnly and quietly, at the cheering people. When we came to the Castle, the cheers were so loud that no one could hear the Guards' drums. And it was a mischievous delight to me, for the whole comedy took place right in front of the King's window, so that he could have the satisfaction of seeing it all for himself.

Upstairs, in our apartments, nothing but long faces! First of all my husband, then Bredenbach, my other ladies, the Adjutant, the Captain of the Guard, who was in waiting, and Count Quast, whom we were obliged to receive at once. I pretended that I noticed nothing, but said, with my most brilliant smile to Quast (and all the rest of them) that "I hoped the King would be pleased with me, and would rejoice in our possession of his people's sympathy." That was my trump-card, and my husband looked as if some one had hit him in the face. But that beast, Quast, answered promptly, "I shall not fail to inform His Majesty that your Royal Highness in this hour thought only of his most gracious satisfaction." But I pre-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tended to be very innocent, held out my hand to him, and said, like a fifteen-year-old school girl, "Yes, do, dear Quast—*do!*"

The next morning I was with the Queen, while Johann was with the King. She received me very politely, but seemed to be a little out of humor, or as if she did not trust herself to be as kind as she would have liked. And at last she positively came out with: "You are so popular, Anastasia. I have already been told what a beautiful reception you had yesterday;" and then she went on, in her whining, ill-tempered voice, and getting a red tip to her nose: "Goodness; when I think how long I've been in Ebenstadt, and yet I've never been welcomed like you. . . ." Of course that was a reproach, but I said nothing, as if I didn't understand the least thing about it, and as she then began to talk about the baby, it seemed to be all right, and I was graciously dismissed.

Poor Johann did not get on so well. The King was freezing, and spoke with high displeasure of the events of the day before. He disliked popularity-hunting, and considered it bad taste to lend one's-self to such public displays: "Tell your wife that I myself do everything I can to avoid such turbulent scenes, and that I shall expect from her in future a greater modesty, and not so much advertisement of herself."

How can one help reflecting, after that, that His Majesty has an unerring scent for a cheer; that he constantly travels all over the country merely for

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

the sake of making public entries; that he spends whole hours wondering if there is any little town in his Kingdom that he has not "entered" yet; and that he comes home quite out of humor if a single person has failed to salute him when he drives out. And that has lately been happening to him much oftener than he cares for. For the Socialists have given the word, *not to salute the King*; and now these fellows stare him insolently in the face when they see him, and keep their cigars in their mouths and their hats on their heads. The King is always half beside himself when anything like that happens. He would like to lock these people up, and give them their five-and-twenty lashes a day. He really said so, to Capernick, or to his assistant.

July 16.

A VEXATIOUS week. Johann goes about deeply depressed, for the King has not forgiven him yet. Lately there was a solemn High Mass for the soldiers fallen in battle. The Court went in a train of carriages to the Palace Church. All the Princes were there, and the King again snubbed my poor Johann. He is overwhelmed, thunder-struck. I can't understand how it is that he hasn't got used to it long ago. The sun of His Majesty's Royal favor rises and sets at all hours in the family circle. It isn't even a disgrace before the others. They all know how it wavers and dances like a leaf in the wind, and yet each one is almost beside himself if the King hasn't said to him "How goes it with you?" three times! So Johann now is going about as dazed as if he were a recruit whistled up for reprimand; my *entourage* is dolefully creeping about on the tips of its toes; but the sweet family is condescending, and oh! so spitefully sympathetic that I should like to fly at their throats. No matter! I take the attitude of knowing nothing, imagining nothing, seeing nothing. His High and Mightiness has shown me also a cross face—not for the first time by any means! I take not the slightest

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

notice of any sort. With my gayest smile I sink down in my lowest courtesy, and pop up again with a still gayer smile; then I draw anyone who happens to be near (and wriggling with fright or confusion) into a lively, whispered conversation, and never seem to notice at all when His Majesty passes me by as if I were a lamp-post, and he had no cognizance whatever of my existence. Johann, on the contrary, gets ill-tempered. He stands there, at a gathering of that kind, with a red face, never takes his eyes off the King, but follows his every movement like a guilty dog who is afraid of his master; and then—the worst part of all!—behaves brutally at home. For the last ten days he has been insulting to everyone he comes across, has lectured his head-steward as if he were a schoolboy, and roared so at my poor Bredenbach that I thought she would have a fit. He tried to give me a talking to as well, but I was out of the room in a moment, and for two days was unapproachable for my lord and master. He did nothing more after that, and I reckon it in his favor, for we are not much together now, so he was quite disinterested in his good behavior.

Apropos our not being much together, my dear good Mathilde has been to see me again, and, *en passant*, she asked me how my husband reconciled himself to the separation. She only did it for the purpose of bringing in some gossip about his going oftener to the Harmony Theatre and of Fräulein Florian having some new jewels. I was

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

half crazy for nearly a day about it; so far that dear soul, Mathilde, was quite successful; but then I begged Bredenbach to put *her* little dogs on the trail, and by the evening it was definitely established that there wasn't a word of truth in the whole story. Johann had only gone with the Grand Duke Clemens (who stayed here a day or two incognito) to the Harmony Theatre, and the said Florian is, according to Court gossip that has penetrated here, an old flame of his Imperial Russian Highness. Their Highnesses have been to supper *en trois* once or twice at the Bristol, and if my worthy Johann found it amusing to do "gooseberry," I don't grudge him his enjoyment one bit. It is touching, though, to think how discreet dear Mathilde could be for the Grand Duke Clemens, even to the extent of carefully concealing his existence from me.

Altogether, as I have said, there are dark clouds in the summer sky, and the Royal Sun shines not for us. Yet, untroubled, I fare forth twice a day in an open carriage with the happiest face in the world. In the morning I shop, and in the afternoon I drive in the Lichtenberg Avenue with my baby. It is the Corso of Ebenstadt society, and I am always enthusiastically greeted. To-day there were two little misfortunes. They are the real reasons why I am now writing this Diary. First, in the morning I was at Stone and Brooks' in the Sperling Market. The people had seen my carriage standing in the street before the shop, and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

had assembled in crowds; two policemen must needs draw them into line, and when I came out they received me with cheers. In the afternoon the Queen was in the Lichtenberg Avenue and drove past me by chance, and not a soul made a sound. I was coming behind and the poor thing *must* have heard the shouting. It was too much for her: she turned off by the Farm and came home by Buchwald. Two fearful crimes, these; and I wonder what will come of them. Something must, for the King pardons me nothing, and has lately given me a bad mark because in driving both to and from the High Mass my carriage was more enthusiastically greeted than his own. In the meantime I heap up crime on crime, and have announced my visit to the Harmony Theatre for to-morrow evening; Johann swears he won't go with me, but Girardi is appearing, and I haven't seen an operetta for so long and I've never seen Girardi, and I will amuse myself, for I'm pining in this atmosphere, literally pining and if the worst comes to the worst, I'll go by myself. I won't put it off on any pretext, for Girardi is only performing for a few days, I hear; and besides, we must be off next week, for the baby must go to the country, and so we must begin our sojourn in Reihersburg then.

July 17.

SOMETHING *has* happened—exactly as I prophesied. Early to-day Quast arrived, and announced a visit from His Majesty to myself. *Tête-à-tête!* Johann got into such a state of mind! but he was glad that he was to efface himself, and that the King was going to take me only to task. At one o'clock he arrived in his own majestic person, and was received by me with the fullest military honors at my command. At first it went off quite well. He controlled himself, and was by way of being very friendly; and it was only by his severe face and by the fact that he kept his eyes fixed on the farthest end of the room that I could see how he really felt towards me. He told me he was not satisfied with my behavior. I was too gay, too frivolous, too lively, and my conduct in public attracted too much attention. The Royal Family did not propose that any member of it should exploit him or herself too much. I must moderate my tone a little, and, above all, I must not so perpetually show myself in public—upon which I observed, with the most humble submission, that all I did was to shop in the mornings and drive with my child in the afternoons. Thereupon His Maj-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

esty snapped at me at last: "You're in the streets all day long. I will not have it." At that, I permitted myself to observe, again most respectfully, but very decidedly, that I had not not accustomed at Kressnitz to be spoken to in such a loud voice. Upon which His Majesty was most graciously pleased to point out to me that in Kressnitz I had been accustomed to have my ears boxed by my mother; "but it didn't do you much good," he added. Well, then I got my back up, and I said, "Your Majesty, my mother is my mother, and I am not aware that anyone in this Court has taken over her maternal powers." The King got quite white with rage, and hissed at me, "It would be very good for you if your husband were as determined as your mother." My blood was up by this time, and I answered, "Your Majesty is surely mistaken, since your Majesty has said that ear-boxing has done me no good. Your Majesty will graciously be pleased to realize that I will not submit to any attempt at coercion." He was so wild with fury that he went to a little table and, to collect himself, took up a couple of books that were lying about. I was silent and there was a short pause; but I did not know that it was the calm before a still more violent thunder-storm. For His Majesty suddenly turned round, held out a book at arm's length, and shouted at me. "What is this? I ask you, what is this?" I was dumb with amazement. Then I said, rather hesitatingly, "That's *Atta Troll*, by Heine." The King

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

snatched another book from the table, and asked again, "And this one?" "Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*," I said, quietly. The King was beside himself. "And this—and this?" he shouted, flinging about the books on the table. At last he threw them all, with a crash, at my feet, came up quite close, and hissed into my face, "Who permits you to read this filth?" I summoned all my self-control, and answered him without flinching before his wrath, and just as straight in the face as he, "In my own house I ask no one's permission as to what I choose to read." And then he yelled at me, like a corporal, "You are in *my* house, not in your own. Remember that. I forbid you to read these filthy things; and I order these books to be immediately destroyed!" Of course I could do nothing against that. When he snaps out "the King" at one, one has to shut up and do what one's told. So I stood very stiffly and said, "As your Majesty pleases!" and he went away, without looking at me. When he was well outside and had shut the door behind him, my composure quite broke down. I ran into the bed-room, locked myself in, and cried like a little child for half an hour. That did me good and enabled me to think the whole thing out quietly. And as I write it all down now, I grow calmer and calmer. . . . What shall I do? My position is difficult, but I don't despair. I cannot live here as the other ladies do. I don't understand why every one at this Court should be so bad-tempered, so sneaking, so slinking. I can't

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

! spend my whole existence between the confessional, art needlework, tea-party gossip, and pious evening discourses. I must be able to laugh a little sometimes, and be allowed to do what I like, if it's not too risky. And I need a little reading, and I like to see a good play now and then; and oh! I can't be quite so stupid as one evidently must be here, to be beloved in high quarters. But I must make up my mind to get on without being in favor. If I can stand well with my own conscience, and have nothing to reproach myself with, I shall be all right. How much easier it would be if I had a different sort of husband—one who had a little courage, and knew how to defend his domestic authority. But I know I needn't expect any support from good, frightened Johann—I shall have to fight it out alone. I'll begin by going to the Opera to-day.

July 19.

A LOT of news. Yesterday evening, first, a great scene with Johann. He came in the afternoon directly after the King had gone, and wanted to hear all about it. We dined alone, and I told him. When I came to the part about the books, I thought he would at least kick against this interference in our private affairs. But no! he was only terrified to death at it, and heaped reproaches on me. "*He* cared nothing for the books," he said; "they were exaggerated rubbish; he had never read that sort of book in his life, and he couldn't understand why I went on with such nonsense." I pointed out to him that my brother, Karl Joseph, who is a very cultured man, had given me my books, and that these particular ones were famous all over the world. "And what do I care if they are?" he cried. "They're Jewish books, simply godless, scribbling rubbish, that nobody but Jews should read. I know very well! Get rid of them, and take care that I see no more of that trash." "But Karl Joseph isn't a Jew," I gave him to understand. But then my Johann got very uncomfortable. "Oh, as to Karl Joseph," he blurted out, "every one knows the stories about him. He is in

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

very bad odor at Memling, over head and ears in debt, and at the Court there nobody will have anything to do with him. Don't let yourself be led astray by Karl Joseph. He'll bring you into a pretty scrape."

It was the first I had heard of it, so that is another piece of news. It's dreadful how everything comes together sometimes. My brother hadn't written me a word of all this, and now I was told all these disagreeables in this tactless fashion, quite unexpectedly. In the first moment I forgot all about our own fatalities, and wanted to go on talking of the matter with Johann, so as to find out something more detailed. But it was impossible. Johann was too put about by the Royal disfavor that had suddenly descended upon us, and we parted, both in very bad tempers.

I had now decided, once for all, that I would not submit, so I ordered my carriage at 7 o'clock to go to the Harmony Theatre. I had hardly finished dressing when Johann came rushing back, and asked me if I was crazy, to play such another mad prank, to-day of all days.

"What do you mean by a mad prank?" I asked, innocently. Did I think (he asked) that it would do us any good for me to go to the opera-house the very day the King had reprimanded me—and had I any sort of an idea that he, Johann, would accompany me? I told him that I had no intention of doing penance in sackcloth and ashes, and that I was certainly going to the Theatre, even at

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

the risk of His Majesty's reprimanding me again, which was sure, besides, to happen, whatever I did. "It doesn't suit me," I told him too, "to take these matters tragically, and embitter my whole life with them. And if you're not a coward," I finished with, "you'll come with me. You'll enjoy it very much."

"I am no coward," he answered roughly, "and I request you not to use such words to me, for I am an officer."

"But, Johann," I exhorted him, "this has nothing to do with whether you're an officer or not."

However, he insisted that it was sheer impudence to go to the Theatre, and I insisted that it was sheer cowardice to stay at home. He was purple with rage, so at last I bid him a friendly adieu, and left the room. He hurried after me, as far as the red drawing-room, and actually dared to shout at me, before Bredenbach and the rest of the service; "I forbid you to go to the Theatre!"

"Oho! my little Johann," thought I; and I felt that this was the moment to lose or keep my position forever. It was a case of "bend or break" and I felt like steel, and answered him with the same want of consideration that he had shown to me before Bredenbach and the service:

"I do not allow myself to be 'forbidden' anything; you may as well know that once for all, and you may as well know, too, that at the slightest attempt to tyrannize over me I shall go away, or take refuge in the house of the Ambassador for Memling."

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I have never seen my lord and master so beside himself. He stood there, as if turned to stone, while I rustled victoriously out and drove to the Theatre.

In the Theatre there was another event for me—namely, the operetta. It was the *Gipsy Baron*, from which I of course knew a couple of waltzes. But the whole opera pleased me extraordinarily, and I was enchanted with its freshness and gaiety. I liked little Florian, and thought the Grand Duke Clemens had not by any means bad taste. I also liked Theresa Mayer very much, a dark, “underlined person,” as Girardi says, and very witty, too; and if it’s true what people say of my holy Cousin Moritz, that he pays court to Fräulein Mayer, he’s not so stupid as I always thought him. I shrieked with laughter at Girardi. He’s so funny and so witty. He heard me laughing, and looked up and bowed to me once or twice. Indeed, everybody looked up at me, and seemed glad that I was enjoying myself so much. I couldn’t help thinking that all of them down there probably imagine I am madly happy. If they only knew! . . .

And to-day, of course, the punishment follows close on the heels of the fun. But I don’t care. I’m not a bit sorry for yesterday evening, I don’t regret it an atom. The consequences must be endured, and so they can be. I must just say to myself: “*Tu l’as voulu, Georges Dandin!*” Well, to-day, very early, Quast arrives for Bredenbach. A long interview, and Bredenbach comes in from

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

it with red eyes. The story of the books is to be rubbed off on her and me. She is to leave me, and the Baroness Stifter is to become my Mistress of the Robes. That simply means that they are taking away from me an agreeable lady-in-waiting, and giving me a spy, who will watch my every movement, my whole behavior of every kind, and report every single thing to the King. Pleasant! Well! I, on my side, have made up my mind to cook my worthy Stifter's goose for her. I'll lead her such a life that she'll thank her stars when she can get away from me. It's not much fun to put your fingers into *our* pies—we young folk of Kressnitz! We can be very disagreeable when we take it into our heads, and the Menteburg Highnesses shall now see that it's not so easy to get the better of a Kressnitz. Thank God! Race* still counts for something, and we will never wear fetters. About three years ago they tried to force a spy on Karl Joseph, too, as Chamberlain; but he led that sneaking Count Hainberg (who lent himself to the honorable game) such a life, and at last got him into such a hole, that Hainberg finally was only too glad to get off without losing his commission.** Karl Joseph managed it very cleverly. He locked up certain letters from his sweetheart, from me, and others, in an iron safe. Hainberg, who thought that he must report to

* "Die Rasse ist noch was wert im Guten wie im Bösen, und Schuhriegeln vertragen wir nicht."

** "Mit seiner Offiziercharge davon zu kommen."

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Memling on every line of writing, stole the keys from my brother, and opened the safe. But Karl Joseph, the slyboots! pretended to have no idea of such a thing having happened and sent for the police. And as he threatened to send notices of the robbery to Memling, Hainberg grew pale and wan with anxiety, and even at Memling they did not know what to do, and finally had to recall Hainberg. He got a reprimand for tactlessness, and is now held to be a bad hand at the business, which he doesn't like, for he can never get such a position with any prince again—especially as Karl Joseph has threatened, if he meets Hainberg in any prince's suite, to turn his back on him and say loudly, "There's a thief* here!" Hainberg has no money, so he had to crawl back to the Army. In any case, his career was done for.

I never liked Bredenbach very specially, but I should never have asked for her dismissal. I mean, though, to have my knife in the Baroness Stifter, and she'll have to know her way round pretty well, and be moreover of an angelic disposition, to be able to stand me.

At noon there arrived a fresh little offering, in the shape of an order from the King. I, my child, and my suite were, directly after the arrival of the new Mistress of the Robes, to betake ourselves to Castle Mente, and to spend the summer there, not returning to the Residence until the King gives

* Kassendieb means also "defaulter"; so there is a play on words in the text.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

us his permission so to do. A formal banishment, in fact; which excludes us, of course, from the sojourn at Reihersburg. *That*, however, I don't at all object to, for it's sure to be just as boring at Reihersburg as it is here. Last year I didn't notice it so much because I was newly-married, and they made a little more fuss about me. But this banishment I do not intend to take quietly. I shall announce that I am going to my mother at Kressnitz, and try my very best to do so really. But alas! alas! I'm not so very sure that I shall be able to. For, of course, I must be supported by Papa and Mamma, and I fear they will desert me in an affair like this. There certainly is no dependence to be placed on Mamma in anything of the kind, for when she hears about Heine and Nietzsche and the books especially, or even about the Operetta, she is sure to be on the King's side. And poor Papa, who is materially dependent on the King of Memling, and wouldn't have any money at all if it weren't for what he gets from him, naturally won't want to vex him, and will beg him, in all kindness, to submit to my fate? However, we shall see.

In the afternoon another encounter with my husband, who behaves as if somebody was dead.

*Castle Mente,
August 7.*

EVERYTHING has happened as I thought it would, or very nearly. I have been obliged to submit, but they have yielded to me a little, a very little; indeed, they even did me the honor to bargain with me indirectly. So one must only be satisfied, and I am satisfied to this extent at least, that Johann has learnt at last that a man is not a neck-tie (*Krawat*), and that even a Royal Prince of the House of Menteburg need not submit to everything.

When they tried to pack me out of Ebenstadt like that, and ordered me into exile, I wrote off at once a piteous letter to Papa, which duly alarmed him. But, of course, the only result was that Papa pointed out to me in a long letter that I must learn to obey, and so forth, and so forth. In German, this paternal lecture reads something like this: "My dear child, the Duke of Kressnitz, your poor father, is, as you know, dependent on the King of Memling. The King of Memling is, as you also know very well, an intimate friend of your illustrious uncle, the King of Menteburg, and it would

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

be most displeasing to him if even the smallest contention should disturb this peaceful friendship."

I knew all that perfectly; knew from my childhood up, how carefully everything was avoided that might annoy the rich relations. But I didn't give up my game so easily; and after the refusal from Kressnitz, I simply sat tight, and told my husband I was not going back to Mente. In the first place I had already spent some months there, and had had quite enough of it for some time; and secondly, thirdly, fourthly, and fifthly, I would not endure being sent hither and thither as if I were a piece of luggage, and I wouldn't go to Mente just because the King had given orders that I was to go to Mente.

My husband thumped on the table—bang! But I was energetic, too, and *I* thumped on the table—bang! And nothing whatever came of the row, except that we said bitter things to one another, and that once again I perceived how totally alone I am here. My husband can be rude to me, though to loftier beings he cannot even be manly. I told him that I would not have my place of abode assigned to me as if I were a prisoner of state, and that, since I should only inconvenience my parents by a visit to Kressnitz I had decided to go abroad, to some seaside place. At first Johann looked at me, quite bewildered; then he asked pleasantly, "And who is going to give you the money?"

"The little money I shall need I have in my desk."

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

To which he, in his graceful way replied: "Rubbish; You've no idea what it costs."

"You are mistaken," I said; "I have quite as much as I want. I shall go to some small watering place, travel incognito, take only baby, nurse, and Trisburg, and give the new woman, when she comes, leave of absence." (By the "new woman," I meant, of course, the Baroness Stifter.)

Johann laughed. "You do not appear to realize what it means to belong to the House of Menteburg. We don't permit this kind of prank you may be sure. Even the slightest attempt at carrying out your scheme would draw down upon you the most unpleasant consequences."

But this sent the blood to my head, and I answered him as sharply as I possibly could, "*You* do not appear, either, to realize that it means to try to bend a Kressnitz. We don't know what bending means. We have a motto, which *you* couldn't understand: 'Stand erect, or break.'"

Johann sprang up angrily and shouted at me, "I'll hear no more of this theatrical nonsense. If you don't know how to obey, you shall learn Basta. Full stop. End of the debate."

Now I could see that the King had spoken of the maternal ear-boxings as a good example for his son, and that my Johann had been egged on so that he really had been almost ready to take me by the ear (*Kandare*). And I got into such a desperate rage that I accepted this as the "end of the debate," and only said, "I warn you now that I shall act quite alone in this affair."

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

"Do what you like!" was the answer. Johann got up, drew his heels together, then rightabout turn, and off, at marching-pace. But I was at the writing-table, in a state of high excitement, dashing off a big official letter to the King. "Your Royal Majesty, and Most Gracious Lord!" and then with well-polished phrases, smooth, subtle, malicious, but monstrously elegant, I told him that I was resolved to go to some watering-place; that my sense of self-respect did not permit me to allow myself to be assigned, like a prisoner of state, to any place of abode whatever; that I had done nothing to deserve anything of the sort; and that I had taken measures to carry out my determination in any event and at any risk. If His Majesty, after reading these words, considered me unworthy to remain a member of his House, then I, too, should prefer to separate from a family in which I had met with no affection, but only harshness and punishment. His Majesty might rest assured that I should do all, on my side, to facilitate such separation. The words "separation," "divorce," "parting"—I brought them in on every possible opportunity! And in the end I remained, of course, in deepest reverence His Majesty's most obedient, etc., etc. This letter I sealed with my Kressnitz arms, and ordered it to be delivered to the King without delay, pressingly, that very instant.

Now was the time for the real uproar. Without waiting an answer from the King, I despatched to

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Papa the news that I was about to travel abroad, and that I did not mean to let anyone prevent me from doing so. At the same time I ordered my trunks to be packed, and sent a second despatch to an hotel in Ostend to engage the necessary rooms, and a third despatch to the railway officials with the request that they would have a saloon-carriage reserved and ready for me to-morrow evening.

All three despatches were, of course, with the King half-an-hour later, so he could see that there was no time to lose.

I fussed about in my room and awaited results. I really was quite enjoying myself. The excitement did me good, the suspense delighted me, and the feeling that *now* something was impending, and that I didn't at all know what, amused me greatly. If one has been so bored as I was, one really isn't fit to cope with such incidents, unless one can manage to get some amusement out of them.

Well! an hour later I heard the Guard presenting arms, and, running to the window, I saw my Johann *en plein carrière* drive into the courtyard, and stop at the step which led to the Royal apartments. I knew that he had been out at the musketry-practice, and so they must have telephoned him hither in a great hurry. In half-an-hour he came to me. He was very grave, most frightfully upset, but at least not rude.

"Now you've done it!" he observed.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I said nothing.

He walked up and down the room with his heavy tread, and we were both silent. I was dying with curiosity. What had happened? But I pretended that I wasn't a bit anxious to hear anything. At last he made up his mind to speak, but he could not look me in the face. That is a Menteburg idiosyncrasy. At such moments they always look all round every corner of the room; and the trait was very marked in him just then.

"The King forbids everything that you speak of. If necessary you will be guarded. . . . In the first place, you will leave this very evening for Castle Mente."

"Did the King tell you that?" I asked my husband.

"No. I have only been to the Chancery Office (*Cabinetskanzlei*) and seen Quast. The King will not see me." His voice was lamentable as he pronounced the last words. I didn't care, and I answered:

"Now listen, Johann, to what I am going to say. I do not go this evening to Castle Mente: I remain here. If they wish me to go to Mente, they will have to tie me down, or I will fight; and they will have to gag me, or I will call for help the whole way. That is the only way they will get me there. If I am to be sent about like a sack of straw wherever the King may choose, then I will be treated like a sack of straw. . . I therefore remain here, and await my opportunity to go secretly abroad.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

And be assured that I shall succeed. If you desire to avoid personal unpleasantness, you will instantly go back to Quast, and tell him how the matter stands."

Johann looked at me helplessly, then he got purple with rage, and wanted to fly at me.

"One moment," I interrupted him. "Did Quast tell you everything that I wrote to the King?"

"What do you mean?" asked Johann.

"I mean, that I wrote to the King that I was perfectly ready to consent to *any* separation—to *any*. Do you understand?"

That was like a cold douche for Johann. "So it's as bad as that?" he murmured.

"Yes. It is as bad as that," I said coldly. "It is not my fault that it is."

Johann then hurried back to the Chancery Office, and was back in ten minutes. I had locked myself in, and we did not meet till dinner-time, when neither of us ate a morsel, nor spoke a word. And at dessert, Quast suddenly arrived. Quite friendly—all humble assiduity! Johann was perplexed by this change. Quast brought the message, that the King requested me to go over to him. He expected me in a quarter of an hour. Johann sat there speechless, but he was absolutely petrified when I coolly retorted that I was indisposed, and totally unable to leave my rooms. Even Quast was unable to cope with this. I loved to see him bowing and twisting, and getting more and more confused. At last I helped him out, and ob-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

served, "Perhaps it will content His Majesty if my husband, with his permission, lays himself at His Majesty's feet."

Quast disappeared, and after a short time a lackey arrived—Johann was to go to the King. He came back in great agitation. The King had been very calm, and had spoken to him quite paternally. The King regretted that things had gone so far, and that in my violent way I pushed matters to such a crisis. I might remain, if I liked to be in the town, but he would suggest to me that my child needed country air. The Castle Mente plan was in no sense intended as a punishment, but the King had thought that after the recent violent scene, I should prefer to be in Mente, where I could be more alone, and find more rest and recreation than at Reihersburg, where there would be more going and coming, and consequent disturbance. The King was very much hurt that I should so mistake his fatherly intentions, but I must be reasonable, and recognize that a journey abroad in such circumstances would inevitably create a scandal. The King expected of me that not only in my own interests, but in those of my poor parents, and for love of them, I should do nothing inconsiderate in this matter.

The concluding phrase had a little venom in it, and depressed me somewhat; but on the whole I was very much pleased, for I had won, and had enormously risen in my husband's estimation. "I don't make any point of going to Reihersburg," I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

told him, "and if the King had no desire to punish me, he must now put an end to the rumors of his disfavor, and come over here himself to see the baby. I will not be summoned to him just now, on any pretext whatever. I will not go to Mente to-day, unless I am permitted to invite my brother Karl Joseph on a visit to me after a week has elapsed."

Johann was very uneasy at my still imposing conditions, but my prestige had now become so great that he declared himself ready to go to the King once more. The King, however, would not receive him, and sent Quast to us, and to him we entrusted the message.

In the evening the Queen arrived; she had a still redder tip to her nose than usual, a still more whining voice, and still more melancholy eyes. She talked out unctuously about all the trials that she had gone through, and warned me to be obedient to the King. I answered I was ready to obey the King, but I would not let myself be banished or locked up, like certain other people. I meant by that Wolf Ulric, the heir to the Throne, who has already been kept in his Castle of Blindenstamm for several years, because he quarrelled with his Royal brother. The Queen was horrified at this allusion, and told me I was talking of things I did not understand. Then she came out with what the King was prepared to accord me. It was not to be thought of that he should visit me just now. I must go to Castle Mente, both to give a

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

proof of obedience on my side, and also because the King could not possibly retract a command from himself. They would see if I might not invite my father or mother to come to me, but they begged me not to insist on the visit from Karl Joseph. Thereupon I said, "My father and mother are always welcome to me, but not just now. It would look exactly as though they had come to comfort me, or else to influence me, and that would certainly emphasize the situation, and seem to point to a crisis. I will have Karl Joseph, or I shall regard all that has been said to me as empty words, and remain at the Residence."

So Karl Joseph was accorded me then. I came here, without having seen the King. The Baroness Stifter is installed, and my brother comes in a week. Johann has manœuvres at Buchwald and will only come to fetch me away from here.

•

*Castle Mente,
August 10.*

THE Baroness Stifter is a disgusting person. In any case I should dislike her on account of her being so lean, and always looking as if she had a lemon in her mouth; but she stammers as well, and that makes me so nervous that I can hardly help stuttering too when I'm talking to her. She watches me like a lynx. Already I have found out that she spies on my letters. She takes them from Trisburg, and insists on sending them to the post herself. At first I thought that she only took down the addresses and reported on them to Reihersburg. But I believe she's capable of any dirty trick, and I'm sure she'd think nothing of undoing the seal or the fastening if a letter seemed to her at all suspicious. What I dislike most of all, though, is that she takes possession of the incoming post as well. That I think is positively dangerous, and I must certainly watch to see if she really does it. For of course nothing would be easier than for her to suppress a letter of mine now and then, and smuggle it off to Reihersburg. It doesn't matter so much about letters which I'm expecting in answer to my own. But what can I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

do about letters that I'm not expecting? Oh, I'll take good care it doesn't happen more than once—for, if it does happen at all, the whole Court of Menteburg shall stand aghast at the velocity with which Mother Stifter shall depart from here.

She tried to make a most neat arrangement about my newspapers. She had them brought to her first, and all I got was some cuttings which she was so good as to select for me, and to paste upon official paper.

"Bang-bang!" thought I, when they brought me the offering. "So that's the first shot, is it?" and I instantly summoned the worthy Stifter.

"My dear Baroness," I said, most good-humoredly, "what were those funny papers you sent me?"

She answered, very stiffly, "They were the morning papers, your Royal Highness."

I pretended to be very much astonished. "Were they really?" I said. "And so you had looked through them for me?"

"So please your Royal Highness!"

"Do you really imagine, my dear Baroness, that I am only going to read what suits you, or what you permit me?"

"It is always done in the Royal Chancery Office and His Majesty wishes the newspapers to be distributed only in cuttings."

"I thank you very much, my dear Baroness, for the kind information. I really thank you very much. But I do not claim at all to be so zealously served as His Majesty is. Do not give yourself

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

that trouble again; and pray leave the papers uncut."

Now she pretended to be stupid, and replied, "No service is too trifling for me to offer your Royal Highness. With your Royal Highness's permission, I will continue to make extracts from the papers."

"With my permission you will do nothing of the kind, my dear Baroness," I said; "for I wish everything in my house to continue as it was."

"But, your Royal Highness, even for His Majesty the papers are——"

"My dear Baroness, do not weary me with any further discussion. His Majesty is obliged to see the newspapers of the whole kingdom, and of other countries as well; and so it is quite comprehensible that His Majesty should be unable to handle each personally, and find out the important paragraphs for himself. But the few papers which I read are really not worth the trouble."

It was evident that she was fuming, and she even tried to protest: "I consider it suitable. . ."

But I cut her short, and snubbed her well. "What you consider suitable, Baroness, is of no interest to me. I will not have my reading arranged for me. Remember that."

But she stood there, although she had been dismissed, and told me, "Your Royal Highness, I act upon His Majesty's orders. . ."

Of course I knew that was coming, and I was quite ready for it.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

"Very well, my dear Baroness," I said; "that may be so; but you must forgive my saying that I am not obliged to believe it. I will, therefore, suspend you from your duties, if you please, until I have had information from His Majesty upon this affair. That will take two or three days; and in the meantime you will be so kind as to retire to Ebenstadt. I will order the carriage for you at once."

Now the fright she had wanted to give *me* was her own instead, for she knew very well that she would be done-for if that happened.

"If your Royal Highness will take the responsibility on yourself, I am of course ready to lay the papers before you as they come."

"Ah, you are restored to reason, my dear Baroness! Have no anxiety. I take all the responsibility." And so I beat her that time!

Of course I don't for a moment doubt that the King had really given her the orders. Stifter then has actually been sent to me with secret instructions besides official ones. But certainly they would have expected her to show more resource than to give away the secret instructions to me on the very first opportunity, and in the first week of her service. To appeal to "the King's authority" at the first dilemma was very maladroit; and if I had suspended her (which in reality I could not have done without Royal permission) or, if I had even written to know if it was true that the papers were to be censored for me by Royal authority;

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

why! of course, they would at once have deserted the wretched Stifter, and lied to me with the sweetest smile in the world about the whole affair. Now I have the upper hand for the present, and I never thought it would turn out to be so easy. Stifter doesn't know very much about me, and I suppose she said to herself, about these tricks, that I would never make a fuss about such trifles, when I had had so many much more important things to endure already. Stifter doesn't know—how could she?—that I am ready to take any risks of any kind in my firm determination to repulse all restrictions, and every smallest wrong against myself; and to fight with all my energy for every tiny liberty that they try to deprive me of. She lost her head, and I now treat her with the most unbridled contempt.

I've found out, besides, that she manages to overhear the servants' talk, and that she tries every possible means, at night, of getting access to my writing-table. But I am on the alert, and I lock up even the books I'm reading from her. But I know, too, that nevertheless, she sends long, detailed reports to the King, for she is always writing in her room; and I have my own ways and means of finding out to whom her letters are addressed.

Castle Mente,

August 17.

My brother is here, and all boredom is at an end. How long it is since I've seen him, and what a lot we had to tell one another! He has grown more manly, and is quite sunburnt, for he came straight from the great manœuvres. He wears "mufti" here, but to please me he put on his uniform the first evening, and we both rejoiced over the gold epaulettes. He has been a Major for the last six months. But that was a year later than it ought to have been, for we're both out of favor. He has discussions and lectures and unpleasantnesses, and can't get any peace—just like me. I really don't know why we two go in for these sort of conflicts so much. It is bad luck, but it draws us nearer together. A grief shared is only half a grief.

I told him at the very first moment the whole story of my banishment, the scene with the books, and then the quarrel with my husband. He knew something about it already, but of course nothing that was true, for Court-gossip had exaggerated, as it always does; and there were rumors in Memling that I had turned the King out of the house,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

because he had raised his hand to me; that I had irrevocably quarrelled with my husband, and that the Menteburg Family had met to consider the question of a separation.

My father, who also heard that, had come from Kressnitz to Memling in a terrible fright; had had an audience with King Frederick, and told him there could be no truth in the story, for I was a good child and would certainly have written home at once, if such serious things were going on. King Frederick dismissed him very graciously, and told him that he himself knew nothing of it as yet, and they must wait. "Undoubtedly I was a silly child and a troublesome child, and quite capable of some folly." But the King said to Karl Joseph (when he reported himself after the manoeuvres), that he had been informed that Karl Joseph had a bad influence on me, and sent me objectionable books to read. "What books do they mean?" Karl Joseph ventured to inquire. Upon which the King shouted: "Filthy books, if you must know. Books that are not fit for a decent woman!" Karl Joseph, of course could scarcely keep back a laugh, and then he proceeded to enlighten the King. But it wasn't much use, and the King said, "No one need read that kind of thing—it's quite unnecessary." And then he put it on my brother's conscience to use his influence to bring me back to the right path, and told him that my conduct during my residence at Mente would be attributed to his teaching. So I am "un-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

der the care of my brother," and out of sisterly affection must try to be good this time.

Of course we both opened our hearts to one another, and Karl Joseph told me everything he has been doing all this while. Poor fellow! he does not have a good time. He cannot stand his garrison, and I can't blame him for that. A dirty hole in the farthest eastern corner of the country, where everyone pries into everyone else's affairs, and where, of course, they're almost off their heads at the idea of having a Royal Prince in their midst.

Besides that, Karl Joseph has been doing most foolish things, and has got into a serious *liaison*. She must be a warm-hearted girl, and, judging by the photograph he showed me, I liked her looks very much. A pretty, fair face, and soft eyes. He took her from 'quite plain,' rather poor surroundings; he was her first lover and her family cast her off, so now she trusts to him like a faithful dog to its master. No wonder that he's the whole world to her. And Karl Joseph is a kind, very romantically inclined man. He loves this poor girl; indeed, I know him well enough to guess that he would be quite capable of sacrificing himself for her.

Needless to say, the story is the one topic in the little hole where he lives. Karl Joseph makes no secret of his relations with the girl; he has settled her in a little house there somewhere, and spends all his time with her when he is not on duty. Everybody is frantic because he will go nowhere, and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

pays no visit, refuses all invitations, and never appears at the Club.* The poor girl is not, therefore, beloved by the lively military ladies. I dislike all military women from the bottom of my heart. Except those in the very highest ranks and of the best families, they conduct themselves abominably, and are to me a dreadful class. They all run after a Royal Prince as if they were mad; and they naturally cannot forgive Karl Joseph for being in safe hands. So from morning till night, and from night till morning, they jabber in that God-forsaken hole about the Royal Highness and his *liaison*. But they're not satisfied with that; the noble creatures write anonymous letters, too—first to him, and then to her, and then to the Divisional Officer, and even to Memling they've sent complaints, and said that Prince Karl Joseph's way of life was an open scandal. Karl Joseph has endless worry about it all, and no one can blame him if he's not very polite to the officers' wives when he does meet them. In short, the situation is unbearable. And moreover, my poor brother is not on the best of terms with the heads of the Church. He has only been twice to church since he went to that hole and has not confessed or communed once; but has irritated people by his brilliant talk, and his reading, of which he makes no secret.

The evil results of all this are plainly visible, for poor Karl Joseph got his majority a whole year later than any other Prince, and will probably be

* Honoratiorenkränzchen: kränzchen meaning club.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

passed over for promotion the next time also. Then he's in terrible straits for money, for he can't live on his pay. From Papa he can expect no help, and the King refuses him any support whatever. Karl Joseph knows well enough that if he were to be seen regularly at church, and if he were to go to Confession to-morrow, he could instantly have all the money he wants, and get out of all his difficulties. But he has too much character for that, and I admire him for it. It's a pity that I can't do anything for him.

We have decided to hang together and to write to one another regularly. Karl Joseph will send his letters to Ebenstadt to the care of Fräulein von Trisburg's dressmaker, and the good Trisburg will have them sent to me here in her dress-boxes. So he'll be able, at any rate, to tell me everything right out, without any outsider's knowing anything of it. We've arranged that, for certain; and my letters to him are to go through old Countess Stramberg, who is Canoness at Odenbach, and who loves Karl Joseph and me, and will certainly be quite ready to play *postillon d'amour* for me and my brother. We've settled everything already with Trisburg, and Karl Joseph will go to see Stramberg on his way back.

So now we are sworn allies; we wander about together, play tennis, and regret each day that passes—though we look forward to every one that we still have to look forward to.

Castle Mente,

August 25.

KARL JOSEPH went off yesterday, and to-morrow my husband comes. My brother and I have made a compact. We mean to be reasonable, and to help one another. And so he, when he gets home, will go to Confession and attend church; and I will play the affectionate wife, and the King's obedient niece. In short, we are both to seem as if transformed, and so rejoice the hearts of all our belongings. It is certainly very uninteresting, but it's sensible, and after all it's only an outward alteration. In our hearts we shall both remain true to ourselves, and by this means we shall accomplish our ends. I have thought it well over, and it was I who had the idea, and persuaded Karl Joseph to agree to it, in long, serious talks. It is useless to waste one's energy over trifles, and to be at war with the family over mere nothings. On the other hand, the better we submit and the longer peace lasts, the more we can revolt when, at some future time, they try to coerce us in any serious matter that is really repugnant to us. I am so much comforted by Karl Joseph's visit that I regard the future with far greater tranquility. I needn't say

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I don't intend to give up my reading, as the King wants me to do. Karl Joseph will send me everything I want or that he thinks would interest me, in the way we've arranged through Trisburg's dressmaker. Stifter lies low, and I scarcely see her. I hope my husband will have been thinking a little, too, during our separation. It may have given him some trouble to do it, but perhaps he has accomplished it all the same, and made some good resolutions, like me. I should be all the gladder of that, because now we shall have to see rather more of each other, in every way, than we have been doing lately.

*Castle Mente,
September 15.*

I HAVEN'T written in my Diary for a long time. There really was nothing to tell, in this rural tranquility. My baby is well, and everything goes smoothly. Johann came back from the manœuvres quite brisk and gay. He had *not* been thinking! I could easily see that; but he noticed the change in my demeanor at once, and was agreeably surprised by it. Now we're leading quite an idyllic existence, and I must really claim all the credit for its uninterrupted calm up to to-day. For I find it more and more difficult to put up with my husband's indelicacy in certain matters. His lack of reserve is hardly to be endured, for, if he takes it into his head to be demonstrative, he doesn't trouble about who may be present. Trisburg and Stifter always know now by his face when he comes to me in an especially gallant humor; and they usually manage to get out of the room before he can actually embrace me, in his chosen fashion. And I don't find it easy to hold my tongue and take it all good-humoredly. For it offends and distresses me more than I can say to be seized and caressed, at his caprice, like a

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

housemaid. But I have to take it good-humoredly or repulse it as roughly as it is offered me; for one can't talk to Johann on the subject. He hasn't the smallest idea what I mean, and as I've made up my mind to be yielding and submissive, as far as I can, I let things take their course. At the worst it only lasts a little while, and when I *have* endured it, there's peace again for a time.

The thing I am most glad of is that our resolutions should have borne such good fruit with Karl Joseph; he has done everything that the Church dignitaries can require of him. And true enough, he instantly got back into favor again. His debts are paid, he even has some ready money in his pocket, and Mamma, who as usual spoke very unkindly about him, has now invited him home for a fortnight. And she even wrote a letter to the King, and said that Karl Joseph was now behaving admirably; and she wrote to me very nicely, and said she was persuaded that it was to my influence that Karl Joseph's improved conduct was to be attributed. I am sure that she has written to our King too, and praised my good offices, for Quast has inquired when I shall be graciously pleased to return to the Residence. But I shall not as yet be graciously pleased to return to Ebenstadt, for I will not be whistled back at the first moment they like; and besides I enjoy these beautiful September days here at Menteburg. My husband leaves me on the 20th, and then I want to be alone for a little time, anyhow. I must recover from him.

Ebenstadt,
September 18.

MAN proposes and God disposes. We came here sooner than I could ever have imagined we should, and much sooner than I wanted to. Certainly I can go away again, in three days, if I wish, but it's not the same thing, and I don't know that I wouldn't rather stay now, and let the baby follow me.

Yesterday—a despatch from Quast. The Shah of Persia is coming to-morrow; there are to be great festivities for him; he will stay two days at Ebenstadt, and the King commands our presence. So the sojourn at Reihersburg is interrupted, and who knows if it will be resumed at all? And thus we saw the Family again!

Moritz was with me yesterday. Monstrously friendly, but, when I think of it, very tactless. For he instantly blurted out that “I seemed to have converted Karl Joseph, and how happily I seemed to be living with my husband.” Thank Heaven, I thought of something to prevent me from snubbing this extraordinary creature—cunning, too, and crafty! so instead of affronting him, I said to myself, “I'll win him over as far as I can.”

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

"Do you know, dear Moritz," I said to him, most ingenuously, "I should very much like to talk over all these things with you, and over religious matters, too, most especially. I have the greatest respect for you, and I'm sure that, with your immense wisdom, you would perfectly understand me. But somehow, a priest oughtn't to be a relation; it doesn't work! One is constrained. One can't speak with perfect openness."

Moritz put on his most amiable expression, and said, "Oh, I can easily understand that a certain modesty prevents you from laying aside all reserve with me." Then he stroked my hand, and left me as my best friend. At least, that is the supposition, for I could feel distinctly the whole time that we saw through one another, and couldn't take one another in. He doesn't believe me and I don't believe him, and we never look one another in the face. Actors, are we? But what can one do? Moritz is certainly the very last person with whom I would "lay aside all reserve."

In the evening the King and Queen arrived, and we all went to tea in Their Majesties' drawing-room.

The King was cold, but friendly to me; and asked me three times "*Wie Gehts Dir?*" And Johann was beside himself with joy to hear him calling me "thou" again. He asked after the baby, and at last had the wondrous graciousness to promise to come and see him. Of course, Johann could not contain himself, but, almost before the

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

King's back was turned, caught me round the neck, and gave me a great kiss. I should like to have boxed his ears.

Eric and Mathilde, whom I can't stand in family-life, because they play the devoted couple, were boasting about their money. Eric told us how he's ordered a new automobile, a new kind of car, direct from France. Mathilde casually inquired "What did it cost, dear Eric?" And Eric, nonchalantly, "Oh, nothing, my child, not worth speaking of—sixty thousand francs."

That's just about the sum I have to live on for the whole year. But Eric, who inherited Clementine's fortune, can, of course, afford such luxuries. I have nothing to say against that. But I consider it vulgar for them to be forever rubbing one's nose in it.

Ebenstadt,
September 19.

AT noon to-day, accordingly, the Shah of Persia arrived. At the station there were the King, my husband, Eric, and Oscar. In the Queen's drawing-room, we ladies, who were preparing a stately reception for the exalted creature. We all went mad over his magnificent emeralds and sapphires. We have no such stones in Europe, literally we could see ourselves reflected in his uniform. Certainly he has nothing else to recommend him, for he is a little, tottering person, who looks very common and Jewish, and has bad manners. It was frightfully funny the way in which he instantly fixed his eyes on me, and began regularly to flirt with me. He would have nothing to do with the Queen, and I don't blame him, for, with her withered face and her red nose, she doesn't make many conquests even amongst European libertines. The King had to touch him on the arm to make him understand that it was not to me but to Her Majesty that he must pay his first compliments. But directly they were over, he advanced straight upon me, and came so dangerously near that I really thought he was going to take

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

possession of me there and then. He wasn't far off it. . . In the afternoon, at five, there was a gala-dinner. The Shah sat between the Queen and me. The way he behaved was simply unheard of. . . . He simply turned his back on the Queen, and showed his intention of talking to me and me only. Once or twice I had to whisper to him gently, "*Sire, vous oubliez la reine!*" which always made him very cross, for he put on a disgusted face, turned to the Queen, and waited for her to say something. As she, of course, said nothing, they stared at one another for a minute or two very ill-temperedly, and then the Shah began to eat—which is by no means a pleasant thing to look on at, by-the-bye—and immediately recommenced his conversation with me. He asked me which of the Princes was my husband. I pointed out Johann, and he looked at him long and searchingly. Then he observed, "*Il n'est pas beau.*" That was rude, but after all beauty is a matter of taste. The Shah asked me if I should be in the Theatre, and when I said yes, he remarked that he would send me something before the performance, and he hoped I would wear it there, for he would take that as a good omen for his hopes. I looked him, speechlessly, up and down, so much so that the worthy Quast noticed it and looked across anxiously. But that sort of reproof has no meaning at all for His Persian Majesty. Goodness only knows what would have happened if the King had not given the signal to rise at that instant! This very mo-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

ment, before I go off to dress for the Theatre, they bring me a bracelet "from the Shah!" Shockingly set, but fabulous, great stones. Really he treats me like any actress with whom he might wish to establish relations.

*Ebenstadt,
September 20.*

I DON'T know whose idea it was to arrange a Review of the Troops in the Shah's honor, but this much is certain—that he wasn't in the smallest degree impressed by it. Our whole garrison was turned out, artillery—and cavalry—regiments were ordered in from Waldburg and Moritzberg—it was really very fine. But the Shah of Persia did not ride, either because he can't, or because he had a suspicion that he would cut a poor figure in comparison with our officers. At all events, he stuck to his carriage. If he only had, though, I ought rather to say! For, when he saw me, out he got, and came to my carriage, and again began a flirtatious conversation with me. The King who had ridden along the line of all the Divisions, came back, and was furious enough at finding his Royal Guest had left the state-carriage. The march-past began, but the Shah still stood beside my carriage, turned his back on the whole Review, and behaved as if he wanted to get in beside me. No one knew what to do. The gentlemen of his suite seemed to take it as a matter of course that the Shah should put no constraint on himself, and should

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

ignore the troops, if the troops bored him. And *our* gentlemen did not dare, through etiquette, to interfere; and, I myself, didn't know what to do with him. I pointed out to him that they were marching-past. He only said, "That doesn't matter to me." The King looked across angrily at me several times, and indeed all eyes were disapprovingly fixed upon me. I was in the most deadly confusion, but what was I to do? At last I took the affair in the only way it was possible to take it—and shook with laughter. When the Review was over, the Shah of Persia got into his carriage quite composedly, as if the rudeness he had just been guilty of were the most natural thing in the world.

At home, long faces and long lectures. What made them most indignant was my laughter. "Affected, my laughter!" and so once more I have involuntarily drawn down upon myself the Royal disfavor.

Ebenstadt,
November 5.

I MUST give up trying to be good—or rather, I have given it up long ago. It's not possible to get on with people who have one in their power, and who more and more misuse that power. Because, for a few months, I gave in, and they thought that I had grown submissive, they now want to tutor me more than ever, and leave me less and less freedom. Their Highnesses censure my toilettes, my visits to the Theatre, my walks, my conversation, my way of doing my hair—in short, everything about me. Naturally that has made me most indignant. There have been a thousand pin-pricks, always something to irritate me, and now my patience has really come to an end. How my small attempts at dressing well are regarded in exalted circles, I could plainly see in the noble features of my beloved Baroness Stifter, at the time of the Shah's visit. And soon afterwards the Queen gave me to understand that I dressed far too remarkably for my position and that they must reprove me for too great love of admiration. That was the word; I noticed it particularly—the latest phrase

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

of the King about me—"Love of admiration." So far as I am concerned, they may use it about me as much as they like. I shan't be annoyed, for perhaps they're not so very far wrong. I freely confess that I like to be admired, and I said so, frankly, to the Queen. There's no harm in it. But Her Majesty observed that a Princess did not need to please, to be admired—that was the ambition of an actress or a *cocotte*; while a Princess was to be respected. Well—I think she probably has had that well rubbed into her. It is possible that she's respected—though it's a very silent veneration, for no one ever hears of it, and the people scarcely utter a sound when they behold the Mother of their Country. But never in her life can she have been admired—no, not even when she was sixteen; and because *she* never was, she now wants to pretend that good looks are not suitable to high rank. I do think it most petty to make a *cause célèbre* out of that episode with the Shah, which at the very most was only worth a laugh. But it's just like the narrow-mindedness of the delightful family I'm married into, to take such things as if they were State offences; for their jealousy can't endure that any one should have the least bit of success.

Every one knows perfectly that the King is so jealous that he gets into a white fury if any of his officials are openly belauded; and that there's no greater misfortune for a Minister than to be beloved. If any one of them becomes popular, he

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

instantly loses ground with the King; and the more detested the Minister is, the firmer is his standing. They even relate of Count Nettersdorf, who was Minister for seventeen years, that he laid cuttings only from the opposition newspapers before the King. The more he was abused, the better he liked the article. He let the King read it, and the King was delighted, and tried to console the Count. The other Ministers commit the folly of instantly showing the newspaper praise of them to their Royal Master, and never dream of the harm they do themselves.

Of course my constant Theatre-going is much discussed. I am now not only fond of admiration, and a coquette, but I am also fond of amusement. However, I talke it all quietly, and do what I like. But I notice (and I'm very glad of it) that the public are greatly pleased with me. They like to see me in the Theatre, and they like to hear me laugh. At a Reception lately, the Burgomaster himself said to me, when I was speaking with him, that he thanked me personally for having "raised the standard of theatrical life in Ebenstadt" (as he put it), by my "interest in the performances."

I get on less and less well with Johann. He has fallen back into a bad old habit, which is terrible to me. He drinks. When he's in that state I can do nothing with him, and am positively afraid of him. Once lately, the smell of wine and smoke made me feel quite ill for a moment, and, when I pushed him away, my good, nice Johann, simply

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

felt for his sword.* He was in such a state that he really would almost have cut me down, because I would not yield to him at such a moment. Afterwards, if he did it, he would, of course, be in despair, but I should not know anything about *that!*

I am in a very bad temper.

* Plempe.

*Ebenstadt,
November 30.*

PRINCE WOLF ULRIC, the heir to the throne, is very ill. He must have been ill for a long time, and the King must have known it, but we did not hear one word about it. It won't be surprising if poor Wolf Ulric goes under. He has been living for so long now at that castle of his, quite alone; he never sees anybody, is frightfully bored, and, what's worse, filled with grief. I am dreadfully sorry for him, though I scarcely know him at all. At my wedding I had a glimpse of him, and I found him most sympathetic to me. A quiet, reserved man, with sad eyes; although he is much younger than the King, he looks much older, and his hair is quite grey. I thought then how badly he was treated at Court; for he always stood by himself, quite lost and absent-minded, glancing round sometimes in the most painful embarrassment, and looking as if he'd like the ground to open and swallow him. I thought then, too, that he must have done goodness knows what. Now I know that it was nothing so very bad, that he should be treated like a criminal. People say here that Wolf Ulric does wood-carving, to distract him

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

in his solitude; and that he is a virtuoso on the cornet; funny things certainly, for an idle prince to hit upon.

Apropos idle princes, I forgot to say that poor Oscar lately confided in me. This unfortunate fellow is also a delinquent. They leave him out there in his wretched village, mouldering away in the cavalry-barracks, and he simply doesn't know what to do with his time—and his youth! If his Colonel did not wink at Oscar's frequent oversteppings of leave on his visits to Ebenstadt, he would have been desperate long ago. "What do you do here, then?" I asked him. . . . And then he confessed to me that he goes to a quite low woman, who lives in the Hirschzeile, in a notorious house. . . . I was quite horrified, and reproached Oscar deeply. After all he is a young, good-looking man, an officer, and a Royal Prince, and surely he could do something better than that. But then he explained the whole thing to me. In the first place he always comes in secret to Ebenstadt—for this purpose and this purpose only, as he frankly admits. He can't go to a hotel, still less can he go to the Castle; he can't in fact let himself be seen anywhere, for if he did, of course all the newspapers would at once announce:—"Prince Oscar Ulric has arrived in Ebenstadt." Once or twice, at the very beginning, such notices did appear, and he had dreadful unpleasantnesses to encounter. So now he wants to spare his Colonel and himself any vexations of that kind, and there-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

fore he hides himself. And that was how, one evening, when he was prowling about the streets, he came across this person; he liked her, and the next time he came he saw her again, till in the end he got accustomed to her. At first she didn't know who he was; thought he was just a young officer. But later she somehow came to know. In short, she is now aware with whom she has to do, and shows herself to be very tactful and affectionate. But all the same, I shudder when I think of a young, fresh boy, like Oscar, getting into such company. "Couldn't you have found something better, somehow? A woman who at least belonged to you alone?" But his answer to that was as dreadful as it was reasonable. He said he couldn't be a bit more sure of another woman, that she belonged to him alone. Those women were all alike; and to undertake all her expenses, would cost too much money. "One gets into debt, one makes a larger outlay, and I simply haven't got it." "Yes, but," I said, "a woman like that!" But he assured me that she was a very quiet, decorous sort of person, and: "She's the only woman I can talk to comfortably."

I really can't blame Oscar. It's entirely the fault of his bringing-up, and of the loveless family-life of our household, that he has come to this sort of thing.

Ebenstadt,

December 4.

PRINCE WOLF ULRIC is in a bad way. *How* bad I can gather from the fact that the King was out there with him lately, and has made a reconciliation with him. Perhaps he will die, and that would materially alter our situation—Johann's and mine, I mean.

The King is having serious trouble of many kinds just now. The reigning Duke of Flinzburg, a connection of the House of Menteburg, who moreover married a niece of the King, wishes for a divorce—or, rather, has to have one, for his consort declares she will not live with him. I could not unearth the particulars. I know the Duke only very slightly, but he seems to me to be very nice and quiet. A grave, modest, cultured man. His wife, Ernestine, whom I don't know any better, is very beautiful, but eccentric; and I am told that she goes about in her garden in colored chemises (or garments that look like chemises) of diaphanous, floating materials; that she fences and rides magnificently, and is said to have a love affair. The King is much displeased by this matrimonial crisis, and he went to Flinzburg to effect

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

a reconciliation. When they told me that, I positively laughed aloud. For there could scarcely be a worse peace-maker than he. And, of course, he effected nothing at all. On the contrary, Ernestine is said to have been very impertinent to him, and to have shown him the door. The Duke, too, vehemently rejected any kind of interference. They even say that, before that, he would not hear of a divorce, and that Ernestine would never have succeeded in doing anything about it—but upon the King's intervention, the Duke, out of defiance of him, declared that he would not force his wife to live with him.

Prince Wolf Ulric's illness naturally stops my evenings at the Theatre. I sit at home alone, play the piano, and bore myself terribly; but am thankful enough when I *can* be alone. It is curious, but I find myself thinking more and more lately of a man who is most assuredly of no personal interest to me, but whom I can't help noticing, because he follows my every movement. He is a Count Zawitsch, no longer in his first youth, but (as they say) "in the flower of his age." I know him only from afar, and I don't even feel quite sure whether he has been introduced to me or not. He is here as Councillor of Legation at the Dalmatian Embassy, and is a very handsome man. How on earth he has found out (and always does find out) which Theatre I am going to I know not, but I can no longer attribute it to chance. The first few times I was certainly very much surprised at the strange

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

coincidence, and it amused me greatly. But, upon reflection, I could not but admit to myself that blind chance could not possibly have anything to do with it. For not only does the Count Zawitsch always go exactly where I go, but he always has that very seat in the Parquette which is opposite my box. When I look round the house, my first glance must fall on him. And there he sits, too, the whole evening, gazing at me. I have watched, when the curtain is up, and he takes no notice whatever of the performance. He turns away from the stage, and stares up at me the whole time. Of course it is an incredible audacity, but I don't know why—I can't feel angry about it. Is it because the thing flatters me? or because he has such a nice, refined face, and such beautiful eyes? It's a great piece of luck that Stifter protests against my fancy for the Theatre by excusing herself, on most occasions, on the plea of going to Church. And when I have Trisburg with me, I can quite safely let her go into the suite's box, for she doesn't spy upon me. But Stifter, when I have her, I daren't lose sight of! I can't let her sit away from me, so that she can investigate with her ferret-eyes the whole house, and naturally, after three evenings, find out what's going on. No, no! she has to come into the Royal box, where she mayn't come to the front at all, but has to hover in the background, and she sees nothing but the stage.

Now, after a few evenings at home, I find I positively miss my silent adorer. This knightly devo-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tion creates a void, I see, when one has to do without it. A certain warmth of feeling creeps up to me from my dumb admirer, and has now become almost necessary to me. I must probe myself carefully, to see whether I really *am* a coquette, or even perhaps a really bad woman. But when I go over the question thoroughly, I can't feel myself to be so blameworthy. His are the only tender looks I ever seen here, and I think it is only natural that I should like to see them.

*Ebenstadt,
December 10.*

THE Crown Prince Wolf Ulric died yesterday. Now Johann is heir to the throne, and I shall one day be Queen of Menteburg. I am profoundly moved and indescribably excited. So long as Wolf Ulric was alive, there was never any talk of this possibility. Poor Wolf Ulric was only just forty-seven, so he might of course have married and had children, and then Johann would have been very far removed from the succession. But now he's Crown Prince and I'm Crown Princess. It alters our whole position. The King will henceforward either treat us much better or much worse. Both are possible. But neither, thank goodness, is now so important to us. For the Crown Prince is held in so much consideration that, henceforth, we *must* be tolerably free from the worst unpleasantnesses.

Certainly, the poor dead Prince had a very bad time of it—it could scarcely have been worse. But the King will surely avoid locking up two Crown Princes in Menteburg in succession. That would be too transparent, and he is too sensible not to see that it would never do. Besides, I am far too

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

popular for the King to dare to take any violent measures against us, now that the people recognize in me their future Queen.

A further consequence of the recent change is sure to be that we shall no longer stand so entirely alone at this Court. A certain number of people—a little “party,” in fact—are sure to gather round us. I knew poor Wolf Ulric far too little to be genuinely broken-hearted at his death. I need not therefore feign any great grief, and I acknowledge that I am filled with a sense of happiness. Who knows what otherwise would have happened to me at this Court! who knows all I might have had to bear, and where my passionate temper might have led me! But now I have a hope for the future. That will uphold me and give me strength to bear all disagreeables. Goodness! it is, indeed, a blessed fortune that has befallen us. I see that more and more clearly, and more and more do I realize that I could not have stood it for long as a dependent Princess. To peer upwards always before taking a single step; to live in constant terror as to whether one was in or out of favor; to be spied upon, listened to—and to drag out, day after day and year after year, like that!

Heavens! I see now, as well, what a good thing it was for me that I had a son. That strengthens my personal position, not only with my husband, not only with the King, but with the whole people: I have instantly become a power through my son! If the Castle were not shrouded in the deep-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

est mourning, I could dance, I could jump and sing. . . .

Johann was here an hour ago, and I had to stop writing. He is after all a thoroughly sound and healthy nature, and perhaps his brutality and violence come from his very healthiness.

He certainly puts no constraint upon himself, and showed his joy quite openly; he skipped about here like a little boy; and for the first time for ages we warmly embraced each other. Perhaps now he will acquire more self-respect, and won't give in to everything quite so easily. I feel that better times are coming.

Ebenstadt,
December 14.

I DID not know at all that the late Wolf Ulric had a mistress who lived with him. The whole story was told to me yesterday. She is called Josephine Schneider, and is the daughter of a minor Councillor, who held the position of Chief-Marshal, and had to give it up on account of this affair. Wolf Ulric loved her truly, and sacrificed almost everything to her. The relations between them began fifteen years ago, and they have two children. When he was wanted to marry, he refused so uncompromisingly that it came to an open breach between him and the King; and at last he was banished. He did not mind that very much, one supposes, for he lived a quiet *bourgeois* family-life with her and his children at his Castle out there—and a very happy one. His equerry and his chamberlain had easy times, for he took no notice of them, did not allow them to bother him, and only endured them if they kept out of sight. They might go away when they pleased and come back when they pleased—he didn't care. The Schneider lady conducted the housekeeping, and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Wolf Ulric played with the children or went out walking with her. Some people declare that he was secretly married to her.

Nobody knows what will happen to her now. She can't be well-off, for Wolf Ulric had no property of his own, and unless he put something by for her in all those years she must now be quite resourceless. The money Wolf Ulric lived on, and the few estates that belonged to him, are family property, and come after his death to the King and Prince Eric. Whether Eric, who, in all conscience, is rich enough already, will do anything for the poor woman, I don't at all know. That the King will consider himself bound to acknowledge and support this irregular relation I consider very doubtful.

Yesterday was the funeral; a great State assembly in the Blue Room. The King, when he entered, looked as usual. I sought for some sign of emotion or grief in his face, but I could see none. He beckoned to Prince Oscar, and said quite calmly to him: "Your helmet is not regulation-pattern. That is unsuitable." Oscar stammered some excuses, but the King insisted: "I do not allow these fopperies in the Army. You will be so good as to wear the heavy parade-helmet, as by order." I was much struck by this calm indifference. It is a Menteburg idiosyncrasy. Even as a young man the King is said to have been just as cold, and as singular in his demeanor, when his only child was buried. At that time there were

CONFESSIONS OF 'A' PRINCESS

some foreign potentates on a visit to Ebenstadt, and the King actually was capable of annoyance because the King of Macedonia had visited him without his Menteburg Order! That was at the very moment when people were getting ready to be present at the child's funeral.

My cousin, Frederick Max, came from Memling to the obsequies. He tells me that all is well at home, but they're having a "Crown Prince Crisis" there too. The Crown Prince wants a divorce, so that he may marry a little aristocrat. There are dreadful battles, because Ottilie, his wife, is in love with her husband, and makes him the most terrible scenes of jealousy. The King of Memling threatens his son with very strong measures, and no one knows what will happen, for George has declared that if the Baroness is banished he will break all bounds and let it come to an open scandal.

Frederick Max tells us about Karl Joseph, too. He is soon to go to another garrison, and he continues to get on better than before—he has even been invited to the Royal Hunt again.

Ernestine von Flinzburg is here too, with her husband. Whether the divorce is agreed upon or not, I don't know. She has been with me, and I liked her very much. She herself will hear of nothing but divorce. She wants her liberty, wants to be able to travel where she likes, and wants to marry another man, whom she loves. Of her present spouse, she affirms that he is a sexless in-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

dividual. She has told me stories that made me feel quite shy and silly, for I don't know very, very much about these things, and I was ashamed to let her see my ignorance, so I would not ask her for explanations. But I gathered that she has no intercourse at all with her husband. . . She would not say who the Other Man is, but I am frightfully curious to know. She says, people will know soon enough, once the divorce is given. Before that, to give his name would injure both of them. Her husband knows the whole story, knows the Other Man, too, quite well; and makes no objection. Only for appearances' sake, he would like to avoid a divorce, because he is a reigning Duke; and he suggested to her to have relations with the other man, and leave things as they are. Ernestine herself wouldn't have minded; but the mysterious Other Man has ideals, and refused to enter into such an unsavory compact.

It must really have been worth any money to see the three of them discussing the case without the slightest ill-will, quite calmly and seriously! For that's what they did. Immediately after the King's visit to Flinzburg, Ernestine and her husband telegraphed to the Other Man to come to a conference. He went; and they met, and the Duke said: "Children, what good would all these worries, and this publicity do you?" The Other said, "What good?" That's plain enough. Your wife doesn't like you; she's therefore not really your wife: and as we love each other, some better

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

arrangement must be made." The Duke didn't see it at all, and said: "Arrangement? But why? I have not the right to forbid my wife anything. She knows what I mean. Very well, then! I don't object to your intercourse; and if *I* don't object, everything is all right. For the most important factor in this whole affair is myself." The Other, however, said, "No! You are decidedly not the most important factor—on the contrary, you are quite secondary. You are simply in the way; and you very seriously disturb the understanding between me and Ernestine." The Duke got quite heated, and said, "But how on earth? I don't disturb you in the least." But the Other was obstinate, and pointed out to the Duke:—"If you don't mind your wife having a lover, it's your own affair. But I will never consent to my mistress having a husband." Then they talked it over and over and finally agreed to think it all well out again, the whole three of them.

Ernestine is certainly very cultivated; she has read everything, knows a lot about literature and the theatre, knows how to dress, too—and, in fact, is a thorough woman of the world. I really have come to feel a great respect for her. And then, she is so pretty, and can be so daintily malicious, and is afraid of nobody. What I like best of all is the way she treated the King. That time at Flinzburg, he, of course, tried to shout her down, but she pretty soon showed him his place.

"I wish to remind you," she said to him, "that

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

you are in my house." The King roared at her again: "I am in your husband's house!" But Ernestine replied, "So long as I am called the Duchess of Flinzburg, this is my house, and my room!" And the Duke sat by and said not a word. The King tried to shout her down again, and bawled at her that "he was the Head of the Family." But she kept quite calm and remarked: "That does not interest me at all. Here, in Flinzburg, we are sovereigns, and I have not the smallest intention of being interfered with by anybody whatever." "Am *I anybody?*" shouted the King, much offended. To which Ernestine, quite calmly: "As regards my marriage, I and my husband are the only people concerned. All others are '*Anybody*,' and I care not a fig for them, nor for you either." The King then said: "I would remind you that I bear the title of Majesty." And Ernestine, instantly, "Very well; and I would remind Your Majesty that *I* bear the title of Royal Highness. The King sprang up, and cried, "I have never experienced such insolence." Thereupon Ernestine got up, went to the door, opened it, and said in her sweetest voice: "I request Your Majesty to leave my house at once"—and he actually went! Undoubtedly it is very audacious of Ernestine to have been prepared for it, or they would certainly have given her husband a hint. Or she thinks that possibly the King imagines that the idea of divorce has been given up, and therefore did nothing to prevent her coming. Whichever way it

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

was, he cuts her dead, treats her as if she did not exist.

Eric and Mathilde came to see me again, and then I got some idea of how my position is altered! Mathilde was positively uncanny in her politeness, and Eric, who has some decent feeling, was quite embarrassed. They began about the succession, but I would not talk of it. I don't think I shall go in for being intimate with their Highnesses, now that they think I may be useful to them, and want to get into my good graces.

If I can do anything for anybody—I mean anything particular—it shall be for little Oscar, for whom I should like to “work” a better station. For him, this death, the funeral, etc., were simply a most welcome opportunity for being able to get a few days at Ebenstadt. He can scarcely conceal his satisfaction at them. It is dreadful, the way he lives, both there and here. There, he has now begun to learn cabinet-making, to kill time! He lives in a cabinet-maker's house, and planes and saws and hammers all day long, so as to make himself sleepy and to have a good night. He has made himself a table and two chairs, and now he wants to make a chest. A dull existence! And here he spends the whole day with that woman. As soon as ever he can get out of the Castle, he runs off there and stops till next morning. And that's a dull existence too! We must try to bring him into contact with a better style of young people than he knows now; we must

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

above all try to find some more manly way of life for him. I have talked to him about it; but he doesn't understand; he doesn't know a bit what I want of him, and asked me "why I was so surprised at it all?" At his age all the Princes of our House had lived just the same lives; and those who didn't, only did something worse, got drunk, or kicked over the traces in some other way.

What little Oscar thus expounded to me, has made me somewhat thoughtful. I suppose it is true that most of the Menteburg Princes spent their lieutenancy as he is doing. Probably Johann did too. Probably he, like Oscar, was stuck down in some little hole, and slipped off to Ebenstadt to spend his free time with a street-woman of some kind. Probably it was from these women that he learnt the coarse, rough ways that he has never unlearned. That's a frightful thought, that a man should learn nothing at that age but to make love to creatures like that; and then should treat us exactly as he treated them.

I made a home thrust, and told Johann laughing—oh, yes! laughing—that Oscar had learnt cabinet-making. Johann laughed too and said that was nothing very startling. He himself had been a lieutenant in the Castle at Rohrdorf! So it fits in! It all fits in.

Ebenstadt,

January 3.

NEW Year's Day two days ago, and the usual family-dinner. Two unpleasant, empty, freezing hours. The King in a bad temper, and the whole family sitting there, accordingly, like whipped children. The Reverend Moritz gets up and delivers an unctuous discourse, full of the sort of lies that only he can pour forth. Of the sublimity of family-life, and of the traditional concord in our House; belauding the virtue of our women, the bravery of our men, the love which binds us all together, and the fatherly tenderness of the King, his gentleness, his untiring solicitude for us all. And we had to clink glasses to that! I was quite mistaken in what I used to think about the Queen—that the woman had something in her. She has nothing whatever in her; she's just a goose. She believed in every word of Moritz's humbug; forgot, in listening to the silly stuff, everything that she has endured; got a red tip to her nose, and was quite overcome. Eric and Mathilde were dissolved in loyalty, and overwhelmed Moritz with compliments and good wishes. Then the King got up and proposed a toast, which was to have been cor-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

dial and affectionate, but which, against his will as it were, turned into a stream of abuse and threatening. He would see to it (he said) that everything in his House remained as it was, and that no member of it forgot that to the King was owed an unquestioning and absolute obedience—and then he banged on the table, and everyone looked at me and knew quite well whom he meant it for.

Of course, I don't mind that kind of thing in the least. That I could ever stand high in His Majesty's favor is simply an idle dream. He positively can't bear me now, and what has already taken place between us has not contributed to remove his antipathy. It is well to know where one stands. I need not now take any pains to be agreeable to the King. If, without any cause (for nothing new had happened), he has let his dislike grow to such an extent that he must bang the table at a New Year's toast—and if he hates me so much that, on an occasion when he desires to be pleasant, his power to speak with a decent show of amenity fails him—why! there's no help for it; and I must be prepared to find that, now I am Crown Princess, he will keep a still stricter eye upon me, and behave to me still more brutally than he did before. At any rate I regard the New Year's speech as an announcement of his intentions, and shall act "accordingly!"

To-day I was sent, I know not by whom or why, a paper that I do not know at all. But if what it

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

says is true, it is certainly outrageous. According to it, the Schneider woman and her children have been literally turned out. She is now quite penniless, and is gone to Ebenstadt to her old mother. She maintains that she is the honorably married wife of the Prince Wolf Ulric; and further declares that a will exists, in which Wolf Ulric bequeathed to her his property of Zwiefelhof. I forgot (or rather, I didn't know) that Wolf Ulric was the actual proprietor of Zwiefelhof, and could dispose of it as he liked. I believe every word of Schneider's story. It seems to me most improbable, and entirely opposed to Wolf Ulric's whole behavior in his life-time, that he should have left the woman and the children, for whom he fought so well (and who were openly dearer to him than the favor of the Royal House), unprovided for. Schneider asks for the Zwiefelhof estate, but they have simply turned her out and treated her like an abandoned woman. She wrote to Eric, and it was then made known to her that His Royal Highness did not consider himself obliged to countenance her requests in any way. I am furious. Even if Wolf Ulric had died intestate, it seems to me certain that he honorably loved the woman who now is left so desolate. And even if the story of the secret marriage is an invention, it seems perfectly clear that this woman was the companion in life of the Crown Prince of Menteburg, and that she must now be treated as his widow, and not as a cast-off mistress. And, moreover, it is certain

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

that these two children, let them be legitimate or not, born in wedlock or not, are flesh and blood of Menteburg flesh and blood, and that the natural issue of a Crown Prince ought not to be thrust out into misery and want. If Eric goes so far in his avarice as to put the Zwiefelhof rents in his pocket, he will be in my eyes nothing less than a legacy-thief; and I shall make no secret of my opinion.

Ebenstadt,

January 7.

I HEAR that Schneider is to be accused of *lèse majesté*. They offered her to put her two children into the City Orphan Asylum. The answer she gave was such that they are formally proceeding against her. The story has had the result of letting me in for a scene with Eric and Mathilde. I asked him what the real state of affairs was, at which he was monstrosly surprised: "What had I to do with it?" Then he said: "It doesn't concern me. What have I to do with the amours of my relatives?" "Yes—but I believe, dear Eric," I said, "that this was scarcely an ordinary amour, but that Uncle Wolf Ulric was really married to the woman."

"Absurd!" he answered; "the King must have known, if it had been so." But I went further: "There is a will, isn't there?"

At that they both got quite red, and stammered out that they knew nothing about a will, but that possibly the King might have seized such a document.

I gave Eric to understand that he was rich enough not to injure his uncle's poor children. "If

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I were in your place," I said, "I would not touch property that was disputed with me by such needy opponents. I should instantly renounce all claim to it, and would not even try to find out whether a will exists or not, or whether I was obliged to yield or not."

"Yes—but you—you really are. . ."

I asked Mathilde what she actually meant by this stifled cry of interruption, and she answered promptly: "Well, it is well-known that you are a little eccentric. Don't be angry with me—but what you have just said, only shows that it is true."

But Eric began very sagely and solemnly to point out to me that arrangements of that sort were quite out of the question. He was not taking the property simply for himself, but for the Royal House. The principle of the matter was, that family property must not be alienated like that, and he was merely doing his duty. If every Prince could make over his estates to his mistress, in a few decades there would be nothing left of our domains. Upon that I remarked: "Well, yes; that may be true—but in that case you ought to give her enough to support herself and her children." Eric observed that I was unpractical and inexperienced, and that I saw the whole thing awry. "That person is sure to have laid by a sufficient provision for herself"—"and *he* was most certainly not called upon to waste good money upon other people's mistresses."

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

"You forget," I said, "that it isn't really your money, but Wolf Ulric's."

Great indignation. But then Mathilde began to inquire "who could have influenced me in the affair?" Nothing would persuade her that there was not some intrigue going on, and she positively could not believe that I felt myself drawn, quite spontaneously, to speak out on Schneider's behalf. They both went away, very much offended, and annoyed with me. But I couldn't help reflecting that if I had still been the old, insignificant "Princess Anastasia," and not the Crown Princess, they would have made much shorter work of me.

To-day I'm going to the Theatre again, for the first time. I am curious to see if he will be there. He cannot possibly know, for it was only a quarter of an hour ago that it came into my head that I could go again to the Theatre, or, at any rate, to the Opera. If I do see him there again, and again in the same place—why! he must be in league with the Devil!

.

After the Opera.

He really *was* there. It's incomprehensible. And I shall have no rest until I have discovered how he finds out all my movements. The curtain was up when I came in, and, from the back of the box, I could see that he was sitting in his usual place. Very gently I stole along by the wall of the box, behind the curtains, so that he couldn't

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

see me, and suddenly—I took my seat, as if I had dropped from the sky! That very instant, he saw me; and for the first time, he permitted himself to make me a sign. He pressed his hand to his heart, twice running, and bent his head, as if he wished to greet me. And, thank goodness! it was dark, and everybody seemed to be absorbed in the music—for I blushed crimson, and it gave me quite a shock. He saw that, and didn't look up at me again for some time, which I thought very tactful—and which, in truth, I was very glad of, because then I could look at him myself. I studied him through the glasses, and I think him really very handsome. He has such a refined forehead, and such a tender mouth. This man might become dangerous to me, if he willed it so. But it seems that he is perfectly satisfied with the part of the Knight of Toggenburg.

Well—God be thanked!

Ebenstadt,

January 25.

TO-MORROW a Grand Ball takes place at the Dalmatian Embassy. The Court gives no Carnival Entertainments this year, on account of the death of the former Crown Prince; but we are permitted to visit such functions as this for a couple of hours, and, at smaller balls of a more private character, we may even dance. I tremble at the thought of this Ball, for now it is inevitable that I shall meet Count Zawitsch. Will he speak to me? Will he try to approach me more closely?—or will he content himself there, too, with languishing at a distance? I can no longer conceal from myself that he has begun to play an important part in my life. I couldn't bear the evenings any more, unless I had his tender glances to watch for. It is incredible that a man should be able so to capture a woman with his eyes—so to bind her to himself. We have never yet spoken one single word to each other, but we have said how many, many things in those moments, when we gaze into one another's faces, evening after evening!

The affair with Schneider causes more and more excitement. The Socialist newspapers have got

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

hold of it, and are writing scurrilous articles against the Court. Every hour, almost, a newspaper is seized; but somehow or other, I don't know how, I always seem to have them sent to me. And I am profoundly outraged by the tone which this rabble takes against us. For, after all, I must say, this Schneider business is a family affair, and these Jews have no business to interfere in our counsels. I was certainly in favor of giving the unfortunate woman everything that she claimed; and was then of opinion that such a proceeding, as that of Eric, was only calculated to lower the prestige of the Royal Family. But now, of course, there's no going back—now, that these insolent rags have taken it upon themselves to show such arrogance and spite against the King and the Royal Princes, and to break all bounds in their insolence and disloyalty—No! now it would be positively ignoble to yield an inch! The worthy Schneider has only herself to blame for this. Perhaps she would have failed in any case; perhaps—perhaps something might, after a time, have been granted to her; but now that she has set this crew against us, she may be sure that she'll get nothing whatever in any circumstances; and I shall be the first to oppose her. Ah! there's a limit to everything. And it is going a little too far when such gutter-scribblers take upon themselves to talk about Us.

Ebenstadt,

January 26.

INCREDIBLE, but true—the King has fulminated against me once more! It is laughable, but it seems that *I* am to be held accountable for the Schneider scandal, and for the articles in the Socialist sheets. This forenoon, at a family gathering, the King cast it in my teeth before them all. Fortunately I did not lose my head, but made the situation clear to him. “Your Majesty,” I began, “I am convinced that Schneider was within her rights. . . .” He interrupted me furiously, and said: “What you may be convinced of is of no importance whatever. You need not poke your nose into things that concern you in no way. . . .” I began again, in my clearest voice: “Will your Majesty permit me to speak in my own justification?” The King was a little taken aback; however, he let me speak. “I could very much have desired,” I said, “that at least some suitable provision could have been made for the woman, and I have already said so to Eric. But I am now firmly of opinion that, after these low attacks and the insolences of the rabble, nothing further can be done for this person. . . .” The King looked at me, a little ap-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

peased, and abashed, too. It was the first time that I had given my opinion so clearly and confidently in a family affair; and I was very proud of it, for I felt that the Crown Princess had begun to make herself heard; and that gave me still more courage, so that when the King tried to turn away from me without a word, I stopped him, and asked, "how this suspicion could possibly have fallen upon me?" And he answered very politely that there was no further question of suspicion; he had merely believed me to be, in general, sympathetic to that kind of thing.

It is quite clear who cooked that goose for me. On one side, that high-minded pair, Mathilde and Eric, who must have carried our conversation piping-hot to the King; and, on the other, that abject creature, Stifter, who must have denounced me, because the Socialist papers are sent to me.

It doesn't matter, doesn't matter! To-night is the ball; and to-night I shall see quite close the man of whom I think so often. I give myself up to a delightful mood of expectation, and my happy humor shall not be spoilt by these sordid worries.
To-night!

Ebenstadt,
January 27.

I WILL try—I really will—to tell it all just as it happened. I'll write it down, just as it was, so that I may remember it better afterwards. But, indeed, that's not necessary. I needn't put it in writing, for till my dying hour I shall never forget what happened yesterday.

Well—it was the ball at the Dalmatian Embassy. As the King did not come, Johann and I represented him formally. Johann, full Crown Prince; I, full Crown Princess; The Ambassador presented all his attachés, and, amongst them, Count Zawitsch. He bowed very low, I nodded graciously, but I know that I blushed. Johann and I held a kind of circle, and spoke to all the diplomats in succession, as they were presented to us—Johann, to the right of the circle; I, to the left. When I came to Zawitsch, I said to him: "You are a very keen Theatre-goer, Count." But he answered, "I care nothing for the Theatre; I only go there to see Your Royal Highness." I was petrified at this audacity. Any one might have heard him, he spoke so loud. I was terrified, and went on to the next man, an attaché of some sort,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

to whom I talked very confusedly, and who must have thought me weak-minded, from the astonished way he looked at me. That was the end of it for that time. But the real thing was to come later. While I was sitting on the estrade to watch the dancing, Zawitsch came up suddenly, at a moment when I was alone; and with an amazing dexterity he managed to make it look as if I had summoned him—or as if he thought that I had summoned him. Anyhow, there he stood suddenly, before my chair, looked at me, and said: "Your Royal Highness, I must speak to you." I was so disturbed and so upset that I couldn't answer him at all. He reiterated it: "I beg Your Royal Highness to let me speak to you." Then at last I pulled myself together, and asked: "But why?"—and I know it was all wrong; I know that everything I did was all wrong—but what does it signify? It was not a moment for etiquette. To my question he answered, looking down diffidently: "I must speak to Your Royal Highness, because I have something of tremendous importance to say to you—because I have something to say to you, that means everything on earth to me." And, then, I committed another indiscretion, for I said, "What you have to say to me, you can say here and now." I had barely uttered those words, when he raised his eyes to mine, looked at me with an ineffable expression and replied: "You are right; I can say it here. I love you. . ." I made as if to rise instantly, but he would not allow me,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

and said "Do not rise, I implore you—do not rise! I love you madly, and I must tell you so." There was a pause, during which I tried to collect myself. Then I asked him: "Have you any idea of the risk you are running?" He answered quietly: "I am running no risk. I may be dismissed from this Court, I may lose my 'position'—what do I care? I have no thought but of thee (*Dich*), no wish but for thee, and I will love thee or die."

Then I stood up, and so put an end to the interview. He bowed deeply, and all he said was: "I shall await you to-morrow at the end of the Lichtenburg Avenue. Come when you will; I shall wait all day." Then he bowed again, and left me.

I was so disturbed and excited that I had to get a servant to bring me a glass of water. Ten minutes later, we left the ball; and all the time Count Zawitsch never took his eyes off me. It is a miracle that no one noticed it—and a great piece of luck, too, that Stifter was not in attendance; it was Trisburg who came with me.

Now I'm sitting here, and turning it all over in my mind. The idea of my going to Rippach (for he must have meant Rippach Wood when he said he would wait for me at the end of the Lichtenburg Avenue), of my actually keeping the rendezvous, is absolutely out of the question. Only to think, though, how much in love a man must be, who has the mad audacity to suggest such a thing to me. And this man is no boy; he looks

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

like an experienced, highly-intelligent man of the world; and his passion must genuinely have made him lose his head for him to go so far as this. And another thing I am turning over in my mind is, that it will be very hard for me now to go to the Theatre every night and meet him there. And another thing—it is wonderfully, infinitely pleasant to be so loved by a man.

.
Three hours later.

Now he's waiting out there—waiting and hoping that I'll come. It is unbelievable the spell that love has! and how intoxicating it must be, too, when a man so far beneath me can really in all seriousness imagine that I, the Crown Princess of Menteburg, a married woman and a mother, am going to fall into his arms at his very first word! . . . He will be very unhappy if I don't come. I am sure of that. For he looks to me anything but a frivolous woman-hunter. Yes—he will suffer greatly, and perhaps he *is* suffering at this moment, while I'm writing these lines and sitting here quite calmly in my room. No, no!—quite calm I certainly am not. And if I were not so firmly resolved to stay at home, if I were not convinced that it is all nervousness, I should really think that I was longing for him. How on earth does he think it could be managed, my going out to the end of the Lichtenburg Avenue? As he's a diplomatist, and has lived at other Courts, he must be aware that a woman in my position can't

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

go off to a rendezvous in that sort of way. I should have to take Trisburg into my confidence—I should have to say that I wanted to walk to-day, and leave the coachman and servants behind with my carriage, and then get there on foot, and run the risk of being seen. But the principal question would be: what should I tell Trisburg?

.

Two hours later.

As time goes by, I get more and more restless and uneasy. Why didn't I instantly say to him last night: "I shall not come"? I was so stunned by my amazement that it never occurred to me. It is frightfully exciting to think that out there somebody is walking up and down, and waiting, waiting for a carriage or a message. . . . After all, I needn't say so very much to Trisburg. If we go together to the end of Lichtenburg Avenue, and she is with me, it will look just as if we had met the Count by accident. She is affectionate and discreet enough not to betray me. If I am not alone, he can't make any dangerous advances. Perhaps I am risking more by staying than by going. Who knows what he may be tempted to do, if he has to wait in vain to-day? Who knows that it may not lead to some dreadful disaster if I do not go? And who knows what unpleasantness that might bring upon me? I must go there, whether I want to or not, and appeal to his con-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

science. I must tell him that all such hopes and desires must be abandoned. I will permit him only one thing—to sit opposite me in the Theatre as before. That's all! And I must find out how he finds out what evenings I'm going there!

February 5.

WHAT has not happened in these last few days! . . .

I went to the Rippach Wood, and now I go there every afternoon. God is my witness, that I went there the first time in the firm resolve to put an end to this affair. But it fell out differently.

When I got there, he came to meet me—so gently, quietly, and with a look of almost beatific happiness. Trisburg saw at once what it meant, and fell behind us, so that she could see us but not hear what we said. Trisburg is most wonderfully discreet. She is behaving splendidly in this affair, and I have grown fonder of her than ever in these latter days.

“I have only come,” I said to the Count, “to appeal to your sense of right. What were you thinking of last night? You must be mad.”

“Yes, indeed—I am mad,” he answered, gazing at me.

“You must not look at me like that; and you must listen to what I am going to say. I have only come, to forbid you to do anything more of this senseless description. Put this thing out of your head. Spare me, dear Count, from more

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

definitely pointing out to you why it is all impossible. Spare me from referring to external reasons, which in themselves, indeed, are sufficient to indicate how foolish this undertaking is. . .”

But for all answer he said imploringly:

“Take off your (*Deinen*) glove.”

“You must not say “*Du*” to me. You know that it is very wrong of you.”

But he only said again, “Take off your glove”—and his voice was so imploring that helplessly I slipped off my glove. He seized my hand, while I continued, “You know, you *must* know, how I am watched; and you surely *must* believe that I am a virtuous woman. Or perhaps you believe quite the reverse, since you venture to approach me so closely?”

“All I know,” he cried then, “all I know is, that you are lonely.”

That word went straight to my heart, it moved me so profoundly that the tears sprang to my eyes, and I lost my composure entirely. He drew my hand to his lips and kissed it. But it was the palm that he kissed, and I thrilled under the warm, close pressure. I tried to draw away my hand, I tried to say something, but he kissed my palm again and again, and I stood quite still while he did it, and his words were ringing in my ears. “I know that you are lonely”—and I felt that those words had made an eternal bond between us. I felt that this man, with whom I was speaking alone for the first time, understood me more pro-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

foundly than my husband did, knew me better—and I let him do as he pleased.

But at last I tore myself away, and said: "Good-bye—we can never see one another again." He came closer, stood quite close, and before I knew, he was holding me in his arms, against his breast, and I felt him covering my face with kisses. They were not at all wildly passionate, or insulting kisses. His lips touched gently my eyes, my brow, my cheek, all my features, as though they only wished to still their longing by the mere touching of my face. It was wonderful what a concentrated tenderness there was in those kisses—something sacred and lovely, such as I had never known before. And they were so compelling in their magic that I could not move, and it seemed to me that the whole world was going by in them. . . It was he who let me go.

"To-morrow," he whispered. And then I woke at last—ashamed, and quivering with emotion.

"No," I said. "We can never see one another again." It was to be our parting.

"To-morrow," he repeated, and took off his hat; and I ran to meet Trisburg, who was drawing near.

In the carriage I put my arms around the dear soul's neck, kissed her, and told her all. She was very much alarmed, and we both cried a good deal.

The next day I went to the Rippach Wood again. I could not help it. I felt as if I should be going against nature if I tried to avoid that man. I felt as if I belonged to him and he to me; and I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

was firmly persuaded that we had known each other not for a few minutes, but for many, many years. I am persuaded of that still, and it is simply incomprehensible that there ever can have been a time in which I did not know he was alive or in which I did not know him as I know him now.

But for all that we must be prudent, and the daily excursions to Rippach will become dangerous in time. Perhaps we shall have to arrange not to walk there every day, but only three or four times a week. I shall suggest that to him shortly.

How wonderful it all is! After those afternoons that we spend, wandering in the wood among the snow-drifts, to sit weary and chilled in the evening at the Theatre, with our faces burning from the wintry wind and the inward excitement, and look at one another, and smile now and then at one another, over all the people's heads, without anyone's knowing! We have found a way to look and smile in our tenderest fashion, without anyone's being able to have the faintest idea of what we are doing. Our smiles have found a rendezvous, where they can meet. And that's the Royal Arms of Menteburg, which blaze high above the proscenium. When he wants to smile at me, he looks up there; and I gaze at him and read all the loving greetings on his face—and it looks as if he were not thinking about me in the very least. . . . and then we do it the other way round.

But—but these daily meetings in the Rippach Wood must come to an end. Up to the present,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

thank goodness! it has always been lovely weather, and so there was nothing extraordinary in my taking my walk every day. But what is to be done when it snows, or even rains? I must think about that.

February 20.

I am in love! I have no other thought but him. I have no other interest, and I live no other life but his. Franz is my all, my whole of bliss. What do I care now for all the petty lectures and worries that used to make me so nervous, that I allowed myself to be influenced by, and that were gradually embittering my whole life? Nothing can happen to me now, because I care for nothing. Trisburg is our good angel. If she were not, we should long ago have had to give up seeing each other. The fact is my kind Trisburg has, here in Ebenstadt, an old relative, who has a most convenient house that can be entered from the street in front, and by the garden at the back. Franz goes in the back, by the garden; and I march up the front steps. And there we are completely undisturbed. I must acknowledge that it is not now so innocent as it was at Rippach—our intercourse. We are both far too passionate natures for that! But so help me God! I cannot repent it. I cannot go about feeling myself a sinner—I am happy, happy, happy!

And after all, who is injured? Whom do I defraud in this matter? My husband has long ceased

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

to care for me—he wants nothing from me but the propagation of the Royal House of Menteburg—that is my function. There was never any communion of souls between us, as there is between me and Franz. Lately Franz used that very phrase “propagation of the Royal House, etc.,” and I see how wonderfully true it is. What a marvelous intellect he has! In a few days, I have become ever so much cleverer, and I owe it to him alone. He finds words, where I only feel instinctively, or imagine. But he can express things, and instantly they become clear to me. Franz is one of the most remarkable men that I have ever known. If he hasn’t made a great career for himself up to the present, it is only because he is cleverer than his chiefs, and they know it, and dislike him for it.

Yes—truly, I do not deprive my husband of anything. Nor my baby. For he is only brought to me now and then, like a kind of amusement; and all that a true mother would do for him is forbidden to me. It began when I wanted to nurse him. . . . Often, when I think of the boundless fury of the King, if he only knew! I feel even happier than usual. No, no! I will shake off such petty feelings. What do I care for the King? What do I care for anybody? There is nothing more beautiful in the whole universe than to sit in the little room in the Wienerstrass with Franz, and let the world go by.

March 25.

My husband is away, hunting; so I have double rest, am doubly alone, and happier than I have ever been before. Spring is coming! I have never felt the spring-time so keenly as this year. We are going to revisit the scenes of our earliest companionship. The Rippach Wood calls to us both! What wonderful things there are in the world; what a joy life is. I know that now; I never did before. *Love!* Had I formerly even the faintest conception of what it is?

Ernestine has carried her point; she is to be divorced from her husband. Here, at Court, everyone condemns her. I alone was lately insane enough to take her part, and say that I thought it splendid of her to wish to belong only to the man she loves. Of course it caused tremendous annoyance. The King, to whom it was retailed, took it quite as a personal offence, or, as though I had wished to defy him, by speaking thus; and, of course, he lost no time in requesting me, half ironically, half spitefully, to keep my most original views upon love and marriage to myself. "Your opinions upon such subjects," he said to me, "make me uneasy enough as it is. At all events,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I wish to say to you now, that I will suffer no scandals to take place in my house." I was dreadfully frightened at that, for I thought he was hinting at something in especial, and I felt as if I were found out. So I could not answer flippantly, as I used to do, but got quite pale and was in a terrible fright. The King looked at me in surprise, and it was evidently an agreeable novelty to him to find that his words could make so much impression on me. For he got quite mild and gentle. . . . But, as is always the way, when one knows one's guilty, and has an uneasy conscience, I felt still more frightened at his mildness, and would have sworn that the Royal spies had already ferreted out my secret. When I told Franz about my horrors, and described the whole scene to him, he said that I might be quite easy in my mind, for it is an old and tried trick, in our special circles, to entrap people by speaking to them as if their "*secret were known*;" so that, if they have a guilty conscience, they get frightened and betray themselves in the end; while, if they are innocent, it makes no difference, for they don't know what is meant. Heavens! it is glorious to have somebody to speak to; somebody to whom one can confide everything—just *everything*. I am no longer alone, no longer "lonely"—I want nothing more in the world; I am content.

Franz laughed hugely, when I insisted on knowing how he used to find out what Theatre I was going to. It is so simple! He told a little official at his Embassy that, "never mind on what

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

grounds," it was his business to watch me! And the little official established some kind of connection with the box-offices at the Theatres, and they always telephoned him then, when I announced myself anywhere. Franz must be enormously skilled in that kind of business. I should very much like to know how many women he has already loved, and led astray. It angers, and yet fascinates me to think of that. But it's no use asking him. He won't be "drawn," is silent as the grave. Lately I asked him if he had ever before had a Princess of the blood for his mistress. But he answered me, "In love there are no Princesses, there are only women. All the rest is equal." Now, for one instant, that answer wounded my pride. He notices everything, and knows me so profoundly that he often divines my thoughts before I'm quite aware of them myself. So he saw that his answer had failed to please me, and said at once, "Please 'Stasia, don't yield to your present emotion. We can't have any prejudices standing between us. If I were obliged to remember that you are a Princess of the blood, or, if even I were obliged to remember that *you* remember it, I could not love you any more with the same candor." He is right. In the eyes of God, and the eyes of Love, we are all equal, are all frail mortal men. And in truth he has shown me from the very first moment, that he loves only the woman in me, since, with no diffidence for my rank, he told me the very instant he met me that he loved me, and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

called me "thou," that time in Rippach Wood. He would love me just the same, if I were beneath him, instead of his being beneath me. Beneath me! is he really beneath me? Is he beneath Johann, *par exemple*? When *that* occurs to me, I really have to laugh.

Franz has told me how he come to the Embassy at Ebenstadt and how he saw me for the first time. He did not fall in love with me at the very first sight, but instantly knew what a God-forsaken existence I was leading. He saw at once that I was not like the others—not so stiff, not so insensible, not so cold. He wanted to go away from me. He told himself that this feeling was pure madness, and he was afraid of becoming infinitely miserable, unless he could manage to put me out of his head. And so he avoided me. He fought a hard battle. (He had told me that already, during our lonely walks.) But when he saw me again, when I made the famous entry into Ebenstadt with my baby, when he met me almost daily in my drives—his passion grew stronger than his good resolutions, and he began to go everywhere that he thought he might meet me. I love so to hear him tell about it! I am always making him begin all over again, and I never tire of listening. When I reflect that at that time I was very unhappy—and yet that all the time a man in Ebenstadt was going about in love with me—it all seems like a fairy-tale!

The other day we had a gold coin cut in two, and now we can each wear half of it on a chain next the

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

skin. That is so splended, too. I make up such funny stories about it. For example, we were in the theatre the other day, Franz in the stalls in his usual place, I, in the Royal Box. When I looked at him, the first thing I thought was: "I know well enough what you're wearing under your dress-shirt, on your breast. And nobody knows except me," and then I thought—suppose there was a fire, and everybody in the theatre was suffocated. Then they would find our bodies, and they would find the half of a gold coin round my neck, and they would wonder, and not know what to think. But at the same moment they would find on the breast of Count Zawitsch, another half of a gold coin, and they would be amazed, and compare the two gold pieces, and behold! they would match! And then, all in a minute, every one would know that quite, quite secretly, we belonged to one another. But they couldn't do anything to us then, except be annoyed at not having known it sooner . . .

Franz tells me how much beloved I am by the people. He tells me what they say about me, and I could listen to that for hours, too. It is marvelous what a delicate instinct the populace has. They found out immediately what was amiss with me, and in Ebenstadt the very sparrows on the roofs are chattering of the unkind treatment I receive in my home, because I am too lively, and because I won't put up with everything from the King.

'April 10.

I DON'T know what has come over nice little Oscar. One hears a most fearful story of him, and, as I learn from Franz, the public knows it and is very indignant. Oscar was lately riding in the neighborhood of his garrison-town with two of his brother officers, when they met with a funeral procession. Oscar ordered the coffin to be set down, and then leaped his horse twice over it. Horrible! He was ordered here to-day for an audience with the King. The King intimated to him that he was to appear in civilian dress. This made Oscar most uneasy; and he came, in great excitement, to find my husband, and ask him if he had any idea what was in the wind, and why the King wished to see him in mufti. Johann said, in his blunt way, that probably he was to lose his commission, which naturally almost drove Oscar distracted.

But it was not so bad as all that. The King merely wished to give, and gave, Oscar some sound boxes on the ear, and he naturally had not desired that this stately proceeding should take place in uniform. They say the King has never

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

been seen in such a fury. The lackeys declare that never has he roared so loudly as he did at Oscar. I'm sorry for the boy, of course, for I can't help having a weakness for anyone who doesn't get on with the King. So I was very glad when, in the afternoon, Oscar sent a request to me—would I see him? I took him properly to task. "What on earth has come over you?" I said. "It is not as if you were a brutal man—how did you ever come to do anything so monstrous?"

"Oh, of course!" he answered, "Monstrous! It's very easy for you to talk. Have you any idea of what I have to go through? For a whole year I've been begging and praying to be sent to a decent station, but it's no use. And now the Colonel has heard that I want a transfer, and ever since he's been furious with me. I mayn't come to town any more, but have to kill myself with work, and every moment of the day I get a tearing from him about something or other. What was I to do? I thought it out, and wondered what to cook up against myself, so as to get transferred. But I couldn't think of a thing. And so, lately, when I was out riding and in a mad rage, this funeral must needs come in my way. Well—like lightning it flashed across me, and I did it—I did what was necessary for my purpose. Indeed, I am frightfully sorry on account of the poor people, whom God knows *I* didn't want to offend. But there! it's done now, and it can't be undone. And I've got what I did it for. They must send me

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

away from Strippendorf now at last, for the populace is awfully worked up against me."

"Did you say that to the King?"

"God forbid!" cried Oscar. "I should think not! Do you know? I was quite quiet while he was pitching into me, and when he roared 'Do you know what you are? You're a mean young cur' (*Lausejunge*), I answered very calmly, 'So please Your Majesty.' . . . If I had told him that I wanted another station, and that I did it on purpose because I was tied down there, he'd have jolly well left me stewing in Strippendorf; and now, just imagine, how damnably disgusting it would be! In any case, I shall have to wait until the Colonel himself applies for my transfer, as he undoubtedly will have to do, for I shall not be tolerated there now. The people don't salute me in the streets any more, and I hate that. For till now I was very popular."

Isn't it another proof of how extreme their measures are with people like us, and how wrongly we are treated—how literally driven wild, when a nice, simple fellow like Oscar does a brutal thing like that?

I talked to Franz about it. He looks at it quite differently, though, and is outraged with Oscar. "In you people," he told me, "there is always something violent and despotic. If you were not princes, you would be criminals."

At his house in Dalmatia there is a Prince, who amuses himself by catching mice and putting them

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

in a big cage to be chased by his cats. Once he shut up his five cats in the cage, and then starved them till they went mad with hunger and attacked one another for dear life. He thought it such a joke that he was always shutting up fresh cats in the cage, starving them, and eagerly waiting till murder broke out amongst them. The brother of this Dalmatian gentleman, who stands very close in the succession to the throne, passes the time by having ballet-girls sent to him from the capital. . . . His Royal Highness seats himself in a little carriage, made for the express purpose, and the girls drag this remarkable vehicle through all the rooms, while the Prince slashes away anyhow with his whip. And then, all weals and blood, the poor creatures are sent home again. Prince Martin of Memling, again, amuses himself by writing anonymous letters to all the world, and has already caused the most fearful disasters by them. As he hears every scrap of gossip, and as at first no one had an idea that *he* could be the anonymous letter-writer (never attributing them, of course, to such high quarters!) he really broke up several households, smashed up engagements, set parents and children at variance—in short, had the whole Court by the ears over and over again; till at last they unmasked him. Not that it prevents him at all from continuing his literary labors, only now nobody pays the smallest attention to them. So that he is really quite harmless. I have only a very vague recollection of all these affairs, for I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

never was at the Court of Memling except as a visitor—I never actually lived there. But Franz knows all about them, for he served at Memling as a little scamp of an attaché. Prince Anton, again, who is really quite a hoary old gentleman now, knows no greater joy than watching for the various scrubbing-women about the house, and slipping up softly and slowly to the unsuspecting females, he gives them a good knock on that portion of their body which comes uppermost when scrubbing the floor. When they tumble flat, in their astonishment, he laughs over it for hours.

It is truly dreadful to think what things there are in the world, and a real blessing that the public knows nothing of them. Franz, indeed, maintains that the people know everything, but I can't believe they do. They must long since have ceased to have any respect whatever for us, if they did. But they *do* still respect us—indeed, they honor us as superior beings. I am learning to understand life clearly now, thanks to my beloved Franz. For example, we often believe that such and such a Baron, or Count, who serves us, and exhausts himself in reverences, has no other thought or wish but to stand high in our favor. And then we suddenly discover that that very Count has republican opinions.

Dear Franz says: "The world is unfairly arranged. What real superiority do you people possess over us? My poor brother had to die because he had abnormal tendencies, and at Memling,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Prince Albert can do as he likes. . . . My poor brother misbehaved himself when he was in the Cavalry; Prince Albert does the same, and if anyone complains or makes a fuss, the dear Albert is packed off for a few weeks, until the story is well mossed over. But my brother's Colonel wanted to prosecute him, and the poor chap shot himself on the spot."

Altogether, the Oscar affair has excited me very much. And what Franz says about "the violent and despotic nature having broken out in him too," makes me very thoughtful, and I see my husband now from a quite different point of view.

.

May 3.

My baby is suddenly taken ill. He is dreadfully bad, and I implore God, upon my knees, not to punish me so hardly as to take away my child. He has had fever since last night. When I came back from being with Franz, Stifter met me almost at once with the bad news. Professor Knieberger says there will probably be an eruption. If only nothing happens to my poor baby!

.

May 10.

My baby has scarlet fever, and the course of the disease is uncertain. I never stir from his side. I can think of nothing but *the Judgment of God*.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

But God could not visit me so hardly. He might punish me, but he could not annihilate my existence.

.

May 17.

BABY is better. Thank God! thank God! thank God!

May 21.

BABY is getting well. I breathe again. I mean I begin slowly to draw my full breath, and be myself again. But still the deadly terror penetrates me through and through; still I start up from my sleep at night, leap out of bed, and run across to my child, to see how he is going on. Still my heart stops beating when I remember the danger in which my greatest treasure on earth lay for so long. Pale is my poor darling—quite white, and so weak; and with it all, so sweet and patient.

Johann, too, is quite worn out.

In all these days I have heard nothing of Franz—indeed, I have not once given him a thought. Trisburg and I were both in such despair that neither of us said one word about him. What will he think? I need not be uneasy about that. He knows, of course, what has been going on, and it will have been dreadful for him not to have been able to be with me in these dark days, to comfort me.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

May 30.

TO-DAY I was out driving again, with my little darling, for the first time. At noon, in the sunny part of the day, as far as the Lichtenburg Avenue and back. Lord God, our Heavenly Father, how I thank Thee, that Thou hast been gracious to me, and hast had compassion on a despairing mother. And I must say to Thee, besides, that never has Thy sun so smiled, never have Thy flowers so perfumed the air, never has Thy blessed spring-time breathed so caressingly, as to-day. And never have I loved Thy world so well as on this May-day; never felt myself so happy here. I know, dear God, that Thou wilt take this as a prayer, for it is Thy will that we should be happy on Thy earth. Amen. Amen.

June 2.

NOW I feel a great longing to carry all my past anxiety and grief to Franz, and tell him all about them and let him comfort me, and take me in his arms, and even make love to me a little. I think I deserve it. And my longing for him is coming back now, full tide.

Well—to-day I'll send Trisburg, and to-morrow I shall see him.

June 3.

I SHALL never see him again. It is all over. All over. He has given me the bitterest disillusion of my life. I can't grasp it yet—I can't understand

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

it. Trisburg met him. He gave her a letter for me, was very cold in his manner, and would give her no account of himself whatever. This is his letter:

“MY DEAR ANASTASIA,

“If a childish illness is enough to blot me out of your existence for four long weeks, then the tie between us is far too slight a thing for me to wish to continue it. I never hold things up when they are inevitably doomed to fall. In the days during which your son was ill you did not once think of me. I did not occur to you—or if, perhaps, the memory of me vaguely dawned in your soul, you instantly drove it away in terror. Perhaps even—no! not ‘perhaps,’ but *certainly*, you put the blame for this illness upon me; you were afraid it was the ‘judgment of God’ upon our love. Now, my dear Anastasia, a love that is afraid of punishment is too timid a love for me! I disdain it. Believe me, the illness of your child has made an irreparable breach in our relations. You would always have brought a certain apprehension into our hours of joy from the hours of anxiety that you have just lived through—and nothing is more intolerable to me than faint-heartedness in these matters, than inward quakings, than irresolution. I should have detected all those things in you, if you had come to me again after that four weeks; and could not have shown you the tenderness that you would have expected from me. We should

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

have been ill at ease with one another; it would have been slow torture. Besides, it is not my way. Therefore, farewell. I have arranged everything so that I can leave here so soon as this letter is in your hands.

"I will write you no thanks for the wonderful time we have had together. You know quite well, of yourself, that it was the greatest and loftiest joy that is granted to human beings. And because it must remain the greatest and the loftiest, I go away now. My greetings.

Thy
"FRANZ."

His farewell letter! My lover has forbidden me farewell; and I cried over it. I am sad, but not despairing. I am unhappy, but in a mild, almost agreeable fashion. Not torn with grief, not unable to realize. It is strange—for if anyone had told me I should lose him, I should have answered that I could not survive it. And now I even feel already that I know how to apply it. The good God and I understand one another very well. I see now that He made a bargain with me. I was too happy, and I had to lose something. So He gave me the choice between my child and Franz. The dear God saw what my choice was—He left me my baby, and took away my lover. The Name of the Lord be praised! I am ready to praise it.

June 4.

It is as if everything combined to compensate me for my loss. My darling is positively blooming, getting rosy cheeks; and he now clings to me and loves me, after my care of him during his illness (when he got accustomed to me), that I have to leave him as seldom as I possibly can.

My Johann is very kind and attentive to me and shows me a certain esteem which pleases me. The best of all is that, since baby's illness, he has not once let himself drink too much. And better even than that, he does not force himself upon me, for which I am particularly thankful to him.

The King is of an amiability and a graciousness towards me! I am really touched by it. I have been made Honorary Colonel of the Life Guards Blue, and daily I receive fresh proofs of the Royal favor. While baby was really bad, Quast was sent every day to inquire. Then when it got about that I was at the little one's side day and night, and left the care of him to no one else, and when it was seen I never even set foot out-of-doors, but shut myself up completely, and was half-mad with anxiety, the King actually began to come in person. Now he is with me every other day, and yes-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

terday he said: "I wish to make a full acknowledgment to you, dear Anastasia. I had believed you to be frivolous and heartless. But now I have seen what a mother you can be, and once more I can feel confidence in you."

Naturally the tears sprang to my eyes, and the King can't bear tears! But as he turned away, and gave me his finger-tips in farewell, I could not restrain myself—and, sobbing loudly, I bent low and kissed his hand.

Of course, the Queen is also with me a great deal, but she torments me, for she is always telling me over and over again how she lost her only child. And then so much terror and so much pity fill my heart, that invariably I weep with her as if it had happened yesterday. Mathilde and Eric have also shown themselves and overwhelmed me with eulogies.

"You have behaved heroically, everyone says," Mathilde told me.

"Certainly not heroically," I observed. "I don't know what people expected of me—I only did what anyone would have done in my place."

"No, no. You are too modest," cooed Mathilde. "We all admire you enormously."

And the sapient Eric intimated that it was nothing less than heroic, considering how infectious scarlet fever was known to be. With these words he got into a fright, and asked anxiously if all danger of infection was over, and I really had some trouble in calming him down.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Moritz, too, the saintly Moritz, has also been with me, and brought me a most remarkable distinction, namely, the Pope's blessing.

Oscar alone has not shown himself at all. He has been transferred to Ringelheim, and the King has forbidden him the Residence till further notice.

June 10.

THE King was with me just now and announced to me that my parents are coming. How delightful! To-morrow there is a Parade of the Troops, and I have tried on my uniform. I look gorgeous!

Often, indeed, I *do* feel a sorrowful void in my soul. Often something stirs in me like the pain of an old, old wound. Often his name comes to me: "Franz von Zawitsch;" and then I have to dash a tear from my eyes.

June 11.

THE Parade is over. It was splendid. I drove in a Daumont carriage, and my son was beside me. He celebrated his first birthday a few days ago. The King received me on horseback at the Parade Ground. Quast helped me from the carriage, and I got into the saddle directly. I rode beside the King in front of my Regiment: The Royal Menteburg Regiment of Life Guards (Crown Princess Anastasia's Own), Number 16. It does sound well! Then we galloped back, and the march-past began.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I looked gorgeous in my blue tunic, and the richly-gilt shako, and the beautiful white bandolier, with the Star of the Clementine Order on my breast; and the public cheered the Regiment, acclaimed me, and the King treated me with marked distinction, Johann was very proud, and Baby laughed.

But Mathilde was green with jealousy, for she has longed for ages to have a regiment of her own.

I am cheerful again, and have even forgotten that I was worried by a little pain when I was riding. It was nothing; I am all right again.

*Castle Mente,
June 18.*

I AM in a certain condition. I suspected it after the Parade-day. Now I know for certain, and the Court Physician, Rodl, who was out here yesterday, confirms me. It is the third month now.

I feel a great anxiety lest the child may be like somebody who is not my husband. It almost drives me crazy to think that it is coming into the world without my being able to tell Franz one word about it.

I haven't yet spoken to Trisburg on the subject. Since that day neither of us has so much as uttered his name, and I don't know whether she knows where the Count now is. Since I have known that I was in this condition, my feeling for

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Franz, which I thought was extinguished, has broken forth again like a flame. I have a longing for him that I cannot describe, and which I must conquer by forcing myself to understand quite clearly that it is all in vain, that I have nothing more to expect from him, *ever*.

A year ago, yesterday, I began this diary. How strange! It's as if I, recovering then from my first confinement, had a presentment of all that lay in store for me. The difference between then and now is simply immeasurable. I am not the same person, but a totally different one. . . whether a better one is the question, undoubtedly.

My father and mother are spending a few days with me. They have both grown older. Papa has with him his indispensable Dachsberg, the beloved of his soul; and Mamma brings in her train a detestable Canoness, a Baroness von Klausenberg. An unbearable creature, who, of course, has struck up a close alliance with my Stifter woman. As the old proverb says: "Birds of a feather flock together," or "Great souls know one another at first sight."

My parents take possession of the child in every spare moment they have, and are quite beside themselves with joy at my expectation of a second. Mamma has expressed to me her pleasure at finding my married life in order again, and eulogizes my husband and the King in every key and every mode, so that I am sick of the chants of praise. But she always ends up with: "*When you are*

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Queen." They count tremendously upon me in that respect, especially with regard to Melitta's marrying. Papa has given me an idea of how rich I shall be, when I am Queen. For we inherit not only the Crown, but the whole of the private property that the Queen brought into the family, and the money that the King himself possesses. So they reckon on me also for material aid.

Mamma is very anxious to know what books they were that made the King so furious. "Do I really read improper books?" and then she presses upon me a lot of pious reading, which bores me to death. I take very good care not to tell her that I am now reading the *Plays* of Gerhardt Hauptmann; and if she were to find out that I actually know Zola and Balzac, and that I have Taine's *French Revolution* locked up in my writing-table she would be the first to denounce me to the King. Alas! it was Franz who left those books with me.

Papa made me tell him the whole story of last summer's falling-out between me and my husband and the King. Now that it's all over, he has plenty of admiration for my pluck, and says, "It is evident that you are the daughter of a sovereign Lord." Dear Papa never forgets *that* for a moment, and he does so love to deal out his little favors. Thus he has bestowed on my dear Professor Rodl the Knight-Commandership of the Lion of Kressnitz. Rodl was nice enough to be greatly pleased by it, and took care to convey his especial gratitude to me, for he thought it was by

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

my suggestion. Moreover, he begged for an audience with Papa, and came driving out in full-dress, with clasps and orders, to make his obsequies.

Poor Papa has had a matrimonial crisis of his own. The Canoness told the whole story to my Baroness Stifter, Stifter told it to Trisburg, and through Trisburg it reached me. Suddenly, at Kressnitz, Papa took it into his head to make astronomical studies, and a turret-room was arranged for him in the Castle. He had all sorts of telescopes and measuring-apparatus put up there, and there he spent evening after evening. Either somebody told tales, or she herself began to think it suspicious, but, at any rate, very early one fine morning, when Papa was out, up goes Mamma to the mysterious observatory, and finds there, to her somewhat unpleasant surprise, a young, pretty girl, who flatly defies her, and says she is doing no harm (*und sich gerade waschen wollte*). She is the daughter of a former gun-loader, one Marie Hübner, who is about two or three years older than I am, and whom I used to know quite well when I was a child. Great indignation, great uproar—which I can well understand, for it is an odious business. But what I don't understand is, how Mamma could instantly have appealed to the King of Memling. For, it comes to this, that women in our position must be prepared for things of the kind, and it is *mauvais genre* to make a fuss about them, and hang them up in the marketplace. Papa, who has had enough of astronomy

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

for the present, did what he always does when there's a domestic upheaval—went off and away, like lightning, with half-packed trunks, to the seaside, and stayed there till the storm at Kressnitz had blown over.

Mamma gained nothing by her appeal to the King, for he signified to her that she must manage these affairs for herself. But he stringently forbade her to make any sort of scandal. *Now* I understand why Mamma always advises me to be submissive and why she always says that men stick together like gypsies.

My younger brother, too, has been acting a pretty little comedy, and has cost papa a pretty little sum of money. There was a girl in the Castle kitchen, fifteen years old, and remarkably beautiful. (Mamma told me about this little affair.) Well, the wench was as pretty as a picture, voluptuous and alluring—all the men ran after her, and there were never-ending squabbles about her amongst the servants. My young brother, Wolf Eberhard, arrived home on leave, saw the girl one morning, and promptly went off his head about her. She, I suppose, knew nothing about it, but he couldn't put her out of his thoughts, and that very same evening he dashed down into the kitchen before dinner and began flattering her and talking to her, and a lot of idiotic nonsense, at which the kitchen gentry were, of course, overjoyed, for it's not every day that a Royal Highness finds his way into their quarters. . . . Wolf Eber-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

hard's ardor grew, and the kitchen folk urged the girl not to be a fool, but they say now that they never dreamt of its being anything but a bit of fun. Well—to make a long story short—it ended in Wolf Eberhard having his way, despite the girl's frantic resistance. He thought that that would be the end of it. But he was mistaken, for she was an absolutely respectable girl, come of honest parents, who told the whole story to the parson, and got him to act for them. There were claims for compensation, worries and unpleasantness of all kinds. Wolf Eberhard had his ears boxed by Mamma, who, one may be sure, surpassed herself on the occasion. He ought to thank his stars devoutly at getting off with that, for the girl was betrothed to a young cook, a violent sort of fellow, who by a mere chance was not in the kitchen when the horrid business happened. He has openly declared that if he had been there he would "have stuck the fellow like a pig."

Six weeks later there were fresh complications, for the girl was in expectation. . . . Papa had simply to pay up, and, with the money, succeeded in pacifying the bridegroom, who had sworn by all his gods that he would get the story into the newspapers.

In short, complications, worries, family troubles, gossip of every sort—but I bear with it all, indeed, I even welcome it, because it amuses me, and because, while my parents are here, I have a feeling of home and comfort about me, and all else in me is pent up, and lulled to rest.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

July 5.

JOHANN is at the manœuvres again. I am alone, my parents have gone, only baby and Trisburg are with me—I can talk to Trisburg! and I have my books. I don't count Stifter, for I begin to have very strained relations with her. Not that she does any more *espionage*; she has somewhat relaxed in that lofty employment. She has been "called off," no doubt, since I have regained the Royal confidence. But I can't get over my instinctive repugnance for her; she is a low creature, and I am persuaded that she has brought me bad luck ever since she came to me.

I have left off wearing the coin; and the first day it was as if I had lost something. But what sense is there now, in wearing his love-token?

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

August 20.

THE summer passes quietly; my condition keeps me here in Mente—I take walks in the Park, I often drive in the neighborhood, but otherwise I see and hear nobody, and the quiet does me good. Johann was here about a fortnight ago, but now is away at Reihersburg, where he has a little more distraction than he had here. He found his time here hang very heavily on his hands. We have so little to say to one another that we can get it all said in ten minutes. Unless there is some fuss going on in the family, and then it lasts a little longer! For this family, in truth, is only interesting when there *is* a fuss going on.

Eric has lost money on the Bourse. That is the best thing that this summer has brought me. Well no! not exactly that! But I *do* think it serves that couple right to have a little slap in the face. It won't do them any real injury, for they are so disgustingly full of money that they will never really notice this little letting of their blood. But all the same, they kick up a desperate fuss about it, and Eric has developed a "colossal idea!"

He complains that he was led astray by the newspapers, and now considers that the State authorities ought to study the methods of the Bourse, and to proceed against any one who enriches himself at the expense of others. I, of course, can't say whether this is at all possible; all I know is, that a Royal Prince, with Eric's means, ought not to find it necessary to make lit-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tle secret "deals" on the Bourse. Johann says that Eric's whole harangue is rubbish, and his project quite impracticable. If Johann gives that verdict, I may take it for granted that everyone will.

Letters from Karl Joseph. He has gone, with his sweetheart, on a summer-trip to Switzerland. Nobody knows him there, he travels incognito, they give themselves out as man and wife, make all sorts of odd acquaintances, and enjoy themselves royally. No, no! not "royally!" They enjoy themselves in a way that no Royalties ever can. I am glad, for Karl Joseph's sake, and have sent them a post-card. "DR. AND MRS. WINTERSTEIN, SILVA PLANA."

October 12.

I AM still here at Mente. Professor Rodl wants me to take walking exercise, and I am satisfied so long as I am not much seen. My baby is beginning to talk away like anything, and is my only joy.

*Ebenstadt,
December 17.*

WE came here a fortnight ago from the country. Christmas is to be celebrated in town; and besides, my time is gradually drawing near. I shall be confined in town, for it is not summer, as it was the first time, and everything is more convenient here. Until a few days ago, I hadn't, funnily enough, been brooding at all upon the bad time that is

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

coming, and I hadn't felt any anxiety. Now, however, fears of all kinds are coming upon me; I find myself continually thinking of death.

Just to show the difference of character:—

Lately we were all sitting together—Trisburg, Stifter, and I; and I was saying that I was afraid of not surviving my second confinement. "If I do die," I said, "the only thing that troubles me, is the thought of my baby. It is to be hoped that I should take the second with me."

Trisburg laughed, and said, "But your Royal Highness, when you are so well, you ought not to think of such things. Doesn't your Royal Highness remember how splendidly it all went the first time? And the second time is always easier. Ask Dr. Rodl, your Royal Highness. It will all be well."

But Stifter pursed up her crooked mouth, and observed, "Yes, yes—a woman in that hour is always on the edge of the grave. She must think of everything, and be prepared for anything."

That shows the difference between a kind person, and a horrid one. Trisburg's answer really comforted and calmed me. Stifter's speech frightened me first, and then annoyed me.

I am very curious to know which it will be this time—a boy or a girl. Johann says, "You have the heir to the throne, so it doesn't matter which it is."

But for my part I want a girl. I should like to have a daughter—a child whom I could keep

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

as long as possible. Little Ulric will be taken away from me, as soon as he is ten years old, and made a soldier of. But my little girl—I could bring her up as I liked. And I could make a friend of her, no matter how much they tried to prevent me. When I think of a sweet little thing like that, growing up close beside me, I could almost weep, and I tremble with joy what the future may open before me.

January 3.

NEW YEAR again, and again the accustomed family-dinner on the 1st. At first I did not want to be there, on account of my condition, for now I can't be sure of any hour or minute. But the King sent Rodl to me, and he assured me that I could attend without any risk whatever. And so once more I assisted at the ceremony! Again there was a speech from Moritz, which scarcely differed by a syllable from last year's. But the King played upon a very different string this time. Much softer and much sweeter. He said that he could now rejoice from the bottom of his heart over the unity in his family, and that he looked forward with great affection to the new member that was expected. He said that God had watched over the young ones of the family. That meant my little Ulric. And that faithful mother's love had saved it from the ravages of a treacherous disease. That certain young men, who had gone astray, were now restored to the right path. *That* meant Oscar, who, all the same, mayn't come to town yet.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

February 14.

I HAVE a little girl, a dear little rosy girl, and she is called Johanna Anastasia. Besides all her other names—Ulrica, Clementine, Mathilde, Fred-erica, Monica, Bertha. Moritz baptized her a few days ago, and it was very impressive, I hear. The King has given me a magnificent sapphire, and my husband bought some valuable pearls for me. I am still a little weak; but I *must* set it down in my Diary that my daughter's eyes remind me of eyes into which I have not gazed for a long time—into which I shall never gaze again.

March 3.

OSCAR has done something dreadful again. About three weeks ago he was given permission to come to Court, and now he throws himself into the gaieties of the capital like a hungry man upon his food. And, one evening lately, he was going across the Cathedral Square with some officers—friends of his—when just at the corner of Ullrichstrasse he had a painful encounter. A gentleman, who was coming towards him, and who did not get out of the way quickly enough, received such a blow in the ribs that he fell against the wall. He is said to have muttered something unpleasant, for which *en passant* one can hardly blame him. But Oscar whipped out his sword and gave the worthy citizen a stunning blow on the head, so that he crashed to the ground. On that the officers and my cousin made off at a good pace, and finally effected a total retreat by means of a cab. The whole thing might have passed off quietly—the worst would have been that the Democratic papers might have once more attacked the officers—but unfortunately, this gentleman had recognized Master Oscar, and he set up a regular hue and cry. If it hadn't been for that coffin-story

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

about Oscar, everything might have happened quite differently. People might have said it was a misunderstanding, or that the gentleman had been insolent; and that would have been an end of it, even if the Prince had been a little too hasty. But, with all the rest, it was a bad business, for the people look at it very seriously, and Oscar is now held to be the quintessence of princely arrogance. The whole town is enraged with him; the newspapers print columns of "further information," and hint at his having been very drunk. In the Socialist sheets the story reads as if, with drawn sword, and drunken, inflamed countenance, he had stormed across the Square in search of defenceless citizens to attack!

So Oscar is kicked out again. The King is raging, and the whole family follows suit. Oscar came to see me the other day, just before they packed him off. He seems utterly broken down by this last unfortunate occurrence.

"It seems as if everything goes against me," he wailed, "I hadn't the smallest intention of having a row. But, I assure you, that the very look of the man, the insolent way he came towards me, and never moved an inch out of the way, made me wild with rage. And of course I shoved him aside with my elbow, and then I distinctly heard him say, under his breath, 'Insolence!'"

"One takes care not to hear that kind of thing, my friend," I observed.

"You're perfectly right; the other man said the

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

same; and I see now myself that it would have been better to ignore it. But I was so angry already——”

“People say you were something else besides angry.”

“Anastasia! *You* surely don’t believe I was drunk?”

“Not exactly drunk—but a little ‘elevated,’ weren’t you?”

“On my honor, not a scrap. Don’t believe what the papers say. The men who were with me can testify that it was no drunken brawl—far from it, I assure you.”

“Then why were you so reckless?”

“Oh, ever since that other affair I seem to be always in a temper. You’ve no idea of the way I’m treated. Especially that senseless torture of keeping me cooped up at barracks out there, for months and months, never able to get away. And then the way I am held with my nose to the grindstone. The King has given a hint that I’m to be kept under strict discipline. And so every slinking cur thinks he’ll get on quicker if he gives me a bad time of it; and it’s a regular competition between them which can worry me most. And I haven’t a single friend, not a soul that I can speak to—no, I’ve got to keep it all in, swallow it all down—it’s enough to put a man beside himself, I tell you.”

I am sorry for Oscar, for, indeed, he has not deserved his fate. He’s simply a victim of that per-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

verted system of theirs, and their heartless, ill-advised treatment. He used to be a kind, cheery fellow, and a year ago he looked a mere boy. And now they have embittered him so that his features have got quite sharp, and he's on the high road to become a different person, and by no means a better one. First, they stuck him away out there in Strippendorf, where from sheer *ennui* he learnt to be a joiner, and then took a desperate final step. And now they punish him and punish him, and never know the moment for leniency, but are making him quite reckless by their implacability. If he were a clever hypocrite he would get on far better, and would be as popular in high quarters as with everyone else. To be a hypocrite is the only way to defend one's-self against the system here. But Oscar is far too frank-natured for that, and so he's the scape-goat for everything. These two scandals, coming so close together, will stick to him as long as he lives. No power in heaven or earth can whitewash him of them.

Ebenstadt,
April 3.

I HAVE begun to go to the Theatre again. I must have some distraction in the evening; I must have a little fun, if I am to exist at all. Certainly, the first time made me feel very sad, when I looked down at the well-known place, and saw a strange face there. But now I never look in that direction at all, and the Theatre has again become a necessity to me.

Necessity Yes; and tenderness, too, has become a necessity. I do so long for somebody to be good to me, to love me, and pet me a little. What's the good? Where shall I find him; and if I did find him, how can I ever trust a man again?

These last few weeks I have struck up a kind of friendship with the Rodl man. We talk about all sorts of things; and so, at any rate, I can listen again to the conversation of a clever, cultivated man. A man, too, who has quite original ideas, and who knows so much, and has had so much experience—all that interests and charms me so! He opens quite a new world to me—shows me all kinds of things that I had no notion of before. Rodl is married, so he's quite safe. He has an immense practice at Ebenstadt, goes everywhere, and sees a lot. Besides, I don't think women

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

make much of an impression on him. His profession causes him to see them in situations which must destroy a good many illusions. Nevertheless, he is a most agreeable man, and quite handsome, too, with his full, fair beard, and his firm, good-humored expression.

I always press him to stay when he pays me a visit, and as there is always either Trisburg or Stifter in waiting, there is nothing remarkable in my doing so. Naturally, what we talk about depends on whether it is Trisburg or Stifter. Yesterday it was Trisburg, who always has the tact to withdraw into a window, or to busy herself somehow or other, so that one feels quite as if one were alone. And yesterday Rodl told me that I was now quite well again, and that even the after-treatment might be relinquished. I was literally horrified, and made no secret of it.

"Oh dear!" I cried, "it will be very dull for me now. I shall miss you very much dear doctor." He got quite red, which was the last thing I expected of him, and although I rather liked it, it embarrassed me, too, so that I was silent from confusion. Then Rodl said, "I could certainly come once or twice more—my professional conscience will permit me that much, since it is agreeable to your Royal Highness."

"Do come, indeed, dear doctor," I begged him.

And when I consider, I find I really want him. I want him for no other reason than that I must have somebody whom I can confide in. I don't

Ebenstadt,

April 3.

I HAVE begun to go to the Theatre again. I must have some distraction in the evening; I must have a little fun, if I am to exist at all. Certainly, the first time made me feel very sad, when I looked down at the well-known place, and saw a strange face there. But now I never look in that direction at all, and the Theatre has again become a necessity to me.

Necessity Yes; and tenderness, too, has become a necessity. I do so long for somebody to be good to me, to love me, and pet me a little. What's the good? Where shall I find him; and if I did find him, how can I ever trust a man again?

These last few weeks I have struck up a kind of friendship with the Rodl man. We talk about all sorts of things; and so, at any rate, I can listen again to the conversation of a clever, cultivated man. A man, too, who has quite original ideas, and who knows so much, and has had so much experience—all that interests and charms me so! He opens quite a new world to me—shows me all kinds of things that I had no notion of before. Rodl is married, so he's quite safe. He has an immense practice at Ebenstadt, goes everywhere, and sees a lot. Besides, I don't think women

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

make much of an impression on him. His profession causes him to see them in situations which must destroy a good many illusions. Nevertheless, he is a most agreeable man, and quite handsome, too, with his full, fair beard, and his firm, good-humored expression.

I always press him to stay when he pays me a visit, and as there is always either Trisburg or Stifter in waiting, there is nothing remarkable in my doing so. Naturally, what we talk about depends on whether it is Trisburg or Stifter. Yesterday it was Trisburg, who always has the tact to withdraw into a window, or to busy herself somehow or other, so that one feels quite as if one were alone. And yesterday Rodl told me that I was now quite well again, and that even the after-treatment might be relinquished. I was literally horrified, and made no secret of it.

"Oh dear!" I cried, "it will be very dull for me now. I shall miss you very much dear doctor." He got quite red, which was the last thing I expected of him, and although I rather liked it, it embarrassed me, too, so that I was silent from confusion. Then Rodl said, "I could certainly come once or twice more—my professional conscience will permit me that much, since it is agreeable to your Royal Highness."

"Do come, indeed, dear doctor," I begged him.

And when I consider, I find I really want him. I want him for no other reason than that I must have somebody whom I can confide in. I don't

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

want him from tender motives, for when I analyze myself, I find not a trace of any real attraction towards him. But I do need a friend, and that Rodl can be to me. He is trustworthy, he is certainly discreet—for that is demanded by his profession—and the situations in which he has seen me, make it easy to talk to him about anything and everything. He is a kind of secular Confessor, in fact, for I have never been able to repose any confidence in my clerical one, since I know that his answers to anything I might say to him would sound just as if he had learnt them by heart from the King's instructions.

Ernestine has actually got her divorce, and the Duke of Flinzburg now leads a bachelor life. But Ernestine is to marry the Grand Duke Augustus, whom she has long loved. There are certain difficulties about it, for the head of the Grand Duke's family won't give his consent at any price. But all the same Ernestine is a happy woman. She has the man she loves, at any rate; she travels about with him, she cares for nothing, she has nobody to browbeat her—she simply lives for her love. And the fact that she isn't married to her beloved won't do her any harm in society even. There are plenty of other Highnesses at Cannes or Biarritz, and these relations are quietly taken for granted. The Grand Duke is wonderfully handsome, very sweet-tempered and devoted, and a woman would never want anyone else when she was in his company.

Ebenstadt,

April 20.

It is a curious intercourse that I have with Doctor Rodl. The next time he came after the interview that I have described, he was embarrassed, and, as I thought, strangely reserved in manner. I thought that I ought to explain in some way my extraordinary regret at the cessation of his visits, and I told him plainly what I wanted of him, and how very much I prized our intercourse, and how lonely I really am. The tears came to his eyes at that, and with an extreme enthusiasm he assured me that it was the most beautiful moment of his life. But directly afterwards he showed that singular reserve once more, and our conversation hung fire. He has now been three or four times with me, and I perceive with amazement, curiosity, and excitement that the man is in love with me. He must either have taken fire at my expression of regret at losing sight of him, or he must have been smitten long, long before—but in that case he dissimulated his feelings magnificently, for I never had the least idea of it till now.

And so I am beloved again! I must say it surrounds me with a delightful atmosphere of well-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

being to know that that ardent feeling is about me. It means something to me to have the man sitting with me, telling me all sorts of interesting things, and getting all confused when I look at him. He is no Count Zawitsch, and will never tell me that he loves me. Never will he say one word to me, and that gives me a delicious feeling of security.

Trisburg, too, has noticed it. But before Stifter he dissimulates brilliantly, for though we have never spoken of her, he feels, I know, that she is not to be trusted.

I drive with Baby every day now along the Lichtenburg Avenue, and out to the Rippach Wood. And I walk in the Park, in the shadow of the old beech-trees, with my little one—the same path I used to walk in last spring with Franz. I often think of that time as of something very beautiful, and often little things come into my head that make me very happy. But I have no more grief—not even sadness. The memory of that whole episode of my life is so pure and bright that I see now how right Franz was to leave me at the height of our passion. It could not have been more beautiful, and so it was best to finish it then.

Ebenstadt,

April 24.

THE die is cast. Rodl has been with me, and there was so much of unrest, of appeal, and passion in his demeanor that I could not withstand it. I could see that he would never make the first advance. I feel very deeply the fact that this man has such a respect for my rank that he would never dare to confess his love to me. In the middle of something that he was saying to me, I looked straight into his eyes, and when he confusedly began to stammer, I interrupted him with the sudden question: "Why do you conceal from me what you are feeling?"

He grew white and red by turns like a detected criminal, and I confess that his embarrassment, his absolute loss of self-control, delighted me. At last, he wildly covered his face with his hands, and I thought that he seemed to tremble as if convulsively, or with a soundless sob. I rose, and laid my hand very gently on his hair. Such fine hair, like silk, and as bright as gold! In the same moment, he was lying, all distracted, at my feet; and then, all of a sudden, he had again, at full command, his firmness his courage, his eloquence.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I had to calm him, for somebody might have come at any moment, or Trisburg, who was at the window, might have turned round. He went, in a tumult, and left me behind, in a tumult. I do long for him, and I openly confess that I do. Whether I love him or not, I don't know. But I shall love him. He is a good, strong, proud man, he is a comrade. Just the comrade I want—a friend and companion. If I am to be happy, I must not love him at all. And I am perfectly content to be loved by him, to be his Goddess, to rule his life. That is the feeling I want most to have.

Ebenstadt,
April 30.

FERDINAND implored me to come to him at his own particular quarters. We pretended that he had to examine me in some way that could not be carried out with sufficient precision at my house. I have been with him two days running, and now we are considering the question of how we are to meet in future. Most likely I shall decide to take Trisburg into my confidence again, and to beg her to find us an asylum in her relative's house.

I am as I am, and repentance is a sensation that I have never yet experienced. If I don't want to do a thing, I just don't do it; but if I *do* want to, I at any rate never feel any remorse about it afterwards.

The humble, endlessly devoted tenderness which Ferdinand has for me, is something perfectly new in my experience. Often . . . an immeasurable astonishment seizes upon him, as though he wished to remind himself of who I actually *am*—and that is a moment which always indescribably charms me. He always ends up with "It's incredible! I can't understand how it came

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

about." But I shall soon have to set off for Castle Mente, or perhaps I shall be invited this time to Reihersburg during the sojourn there.

However, we have made a plan for seeing each other regularly during the summer, which is very feasible indeed. I am to be supposed to need a "cure," and Rodl will be "obliged" to see me twice a week during the treatment. He is not particularly happy in his married life. At least, he isn't now, any more, he says. He has grown-up children—a daughter of eighteen and two boys of fifteen and twelve. He was betrothed when he was a mere student. They have quaint customs in those circles! He was studying, as a young fellow, at the University of Gerdasbrunn—as poor as a church mouse, for his father was a petty official of some kind, and could give him no allowance, and he lodged with some people, who had a daughter. The girl fell in love with him, and became his mistress. He tells me that such things are everyday matters—the usual fate of poor students. The mother of the bride gives them board and lodgings, often pays the examination fees, and in return for all that the student promises—frequently in writing—to marry the girl so soon as he has his degree. Rodl had already ceased to love his wife when he married her. He only did his duty as a man of honor. She is a homely creature, who keeps his house in order for him. Lately, when I was at his house, he introduced her to me. At first I did not wish it, but he said it

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

would look unkind and his wife might think it strange.

But it was a very disagreeable sensation to me to meet this person, whom I certainly am betraying. When I saw her, though, all my discomfort disappeared, and every doubt for the future. She looks like an old woman, withered and faded, and is quite grey already, was shockingly dressed, and was overwhelmed with awe of me. Then came the children, a pretty girl, and the older boy, a splendid fellow, who looks as Ferdinand must have looked at his age.

He tells me that he fell in love with me at first sight. "I saw at once," Ferdinand says, "that you were not like the other Princesses. It was as a woman that you attracted me. The woman in you is stronger than the Princess. With you, aristocracy is only an added charm—something that as it were, enhances your womanhood, and makes it still more dazzling."

He spent many sleepless nights in thinking of me. But it simply never occurred to him that I could ever take any notice of his existence. And that's why he is now my utterly, blindly devoted slave. He lives as in a dream, and I live in an infinite sense of well-being such as I never knew before, for devotion like this is medicine to me, puts me in tune, as it were, makes me gay and well—and, moreover, I find it so delicious to be able to talk over all my little troubles with him. It wasn't a bit like that with Franz. With Ferdinand, I talk

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

about my children, and he gives me advice; and I talk about my money troubles, and he knows what to tell me about them too. It is almost like a happy middle-class marriage. Only sometimes, his terrible dread lest anything should be found out gets on my nerves. He is painfully cautious. He tells me that he is frightfully envied by the other Professors and Doctors, that they are all hostile to him, and persecute him on account of his splendid practice; and that they would show not the slightest mercy if once they had any kind of a hold over him. "They would be capable of betraying you, denouncing you to your husband if they thought they could injure *me* by doing so," he says.

May 7.

I AM on the point of starting for the Court of Tutzenbach. The Grand Duchess of Tutzenbach has had a daughter, and requested the King that I should stand godmother to the little one. I shall stay a week, and I have arranged for Trisburg and Rodl to accompany me. The King *did* say that he wasn't pleased at the idea of my taking the doctor with me, for he feared it might give rise to a rumor that I suffered from some chronic disorder, and he should be sorry if I came to have such a story attached to me. I was very sage, and answered that for my own part I was quite ready to do without medical attendance for these few days, and that I fully appreciated the King's reasons. The King said then, "No, no; Rodl shall go with you, if you want him." I declared that I didn't want him: "I was not so bad as all that!"

"Thank God!" said the King; "for we want a couple more Princes from you." Thanks to this discreet behavior of mine, I have succeeded in almost making the King insist on my having Rodl. It has been arranged that the Court of Tutzenbach is to summon Rodl, as though it was desired to consult him about the Grand Duchess. We are both delighted, for we shall have some good times together.

Tutzenbach,

May 12.

WHAT strange, what interesting things I have learnt here!

Alexandrina, the Grand Duchess, is a superbly beautiful, voluptuous blonde. Small blue eyes, a delicate, somewhat ill-tempered mouth, magnificent golden hair, and a skin like milk and roses. Her husband is a thick-set, broad-shouldered man, with a bull-neck, and looks as if he would like to knock one down on the spot.

Alexandrina has opened her heart to me. She is profoundly unhappy in her married life, and was forced by her father into wedding the Grand Duke Bernard. He entirely neglected her during the first few years, indeed, he even showed some dislike for her. Once the very beginning of the honeymoon (which only lasted a very short time) was over, he had done with her—quite done; she had no further attraction for him. But when she developed from a young, shy, silly girl into an experienced and independent woman, she soon indemnified herself for the ill-usage she had to bear. Her husband found it out the very first time, and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

it was then that he began to find her alluring again. He came to her one day, and told her to her face that she was betraying him. She was terrified, of course, and told a lie, but it was no good. He began to break open her writing-table. She tried to prevent him, but since she was then, as she is now, the weaker of the two, she had to submit to his smashing her secret panels—and there he found the whole correspondence. He snapped up the bundle, and went off with it; and while he, shut up in his room, was absorbed in her love-letters, Alexandrina, tormented by agonizing terror, kept asking herself if she hadn't better commit suicide. In the evening, though, Bernard came to her—he was completely altered. He looked as if he would like to commit a murder. But what he did was something quite different. He fell like a brute on the scared woman, who, paralyzed with terror, could not defend herself against him. And then he forced her to tell him every detail of her affair with the other man; he dragged it out of her with the coarsest epithets, with cuffs and kicks; and then maltreated her again.

She had become desirable to him again now that she had relations with other men. He did not forbid her such conduct, he said not a word to prevent her, and took no steps of any kind to restrict her liberty. Gradually she discovered that on the contrary he preferred things to remain as they were. When she was sure of that, any qualms of conscience that she had had disappeared

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

entirely; and she now has a tolerably free intercourse with any man who pleases her—a liberty that she purchases only, by her confessions, and her submission, to her husband.

Alexandrina confessed to me that at first her husband's cynicism filled her with horror and disgust, and that life became a hideous, revolting burden to her. But that there had been hours in which his crazy form of jealousy made her suddenly crazy too.

I talked to Ferdinand about the affair. I was quite overcome with amazement and horror, for I had never dreamed that such things were possible. But Ferdinand ^{at} ~~not~~ ^{so} much surprised, and told me that ~~the~~ ^{the} Duke had morbid tendencies. . . .

"Very frequently," Ferdinand said, "these highly-placed men suffer in some such fashion, and we doctors know many of their secrets." He told me some of the infamies of the famous Marquis de Sade. I was incautious enough to give Alexandrina an idea of what was wrong with her husband the next day. She instantly asked me how I had got to know that since yesterday; and as I saw that I was caught in my own trap, I gave confidence for confidence, and told her how it is with me and Rodl. She certainly won't betray me. On the contrary, she thought it delightful that I should have near me such a clever and experienced man, who can instantly explain the most inexplicable things. If it hadn't been for him, I should

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

have felt a fool about this affair, whereas now I understand it perfectly.

I have had some incredibly lovely days here with Rodl. He is quartered at the Castle, and so fortunately placed that he can come to me every evening and stay till early morning. It can't possibly be discovered, for even if he *were* seen, the worst supposition would be that he was going to Trisburg. And Trisburg is so affectionate and devoted that she would take it on herself at any moment. She has put up a Spanish screen in her room, so that Rodl can pass through without inconvenience.

And so we live here like a married couple, and pretend every night that that's just what we are. Often he calls me, for fun, "Mrs. Professor."

Castle Mente,

June 4.

I PREFERRED to come here with my children for some weeks, and am to go to Reihersburg later on. I can't avoid going there altogether, but, on the other hand, I didn't want to get there too soon, for Ferdinand and I won't find things at all so easy at Reihersburg as we do here.

Stifter is beginning to get very suspicious about Ferdinand's visits. She has been rude to him, and I notice that she once more anxiously inspects my correspondence. I shall be cautious, and, if possible, I'll catch her tripping, so that I can pack her off and make a row about it. The children flourish. and are so sweet and pretty—and nothing is wanting to my happiness.

Castle Mente,

June 30.

THERE'S no peace for Oscar. He came to me secretly, yesterday, and stayed the night. What has become of the cheery, nice man I used to know? I feel uneasy when I hear his wild talk, his oaths and revilings against the King and the whole family.

He came to me secretly to implore my help.

"You're Crown Princess now, and you're in high favor, and you can easily intercede for me."

The girl from the Hirschzeile got into the train, one fine day, and came to him in his new station. (Since the rencounter in the Cathedral Square, Oscar has again been banished from the capital). So either she felt a longing for him, or she thought it a good speculation—but, at any rate, one fine day she arrived at Oscar's quarters. He, of course, received her with open arms, and instantly installed her close by. Now she lives there with him; but, since Oscar is closely watched, and already unfavorably regarded by his superior officers, and since (as I said before) in these small towns they don't like to find that their Royal Prince is already taken possession of—the whole

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

story was reported to Ebenstadt. And they have even, in some incomprehensible fashion, managed to nose out the girl's identity, and, of course, everyone is intensely scandalized at Oscar's living with a woman of the streets. His Colonel summoned him, and said, "Your conduct is causing offence. I would not dare to permit even my most subordinate officer to have relations with a woman of that class." Oscar flew at him, and begged to be excused, most emphatically, from these very moral solitudes. But then the Colonel got really nasty, and gave Oscar a fortnight's confinement to barracks. Of course, Oscar had to sing small then.* But on top of that came a letter from Kapernick, the King's Adjutant, bringing an order to remove the lady within eight days "or measures would be taken to dispose of her otherwise." Oscar didn't know what to do then, so he came to me.

"You are influential," he said. "You are the only one who has any pluck, the only one that dares to speak up in the family. If they take this girl away from me again, I shall do something idiotic, I'll make some sort of a row, and things will only be worse than they are now. What on earth do they want of me? I don't do anything to anyone, I live quite soberly and obscurely. I don't drink, I don't play, I have no debts, the girl doesn't ruin me, and makes no claims on me. There's no fear of our having children—that's out of the ques-

* "Den hat Oskar natürlich abbrummen müssen."

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tion; so what are they afraid of? I must have somebody; I simply can't stand it unless I have!"

"Do you know, Oscar," I said, "the best thing for you would be to marry."

"For God's sake," he cried, "for God's sake don't begin that. I should absolutely refuse. Nothing worse could happen to me."

"But why?" I asked. "It's quite possible for you to find a wife whom you could love."

"No!" he passionately declared. "It's perfectly impossible. I know pretty well whom they have in their eye for me, and I'm not attracted. In my present state, it would be impossible for me to live with a Princess. Yes—even if I got one like you. You understand me, you are kind, you are an exception, all round." And he looked at me quite sentimentally.

After a great deal of discussion, I promised him to drive to Reihersburg to-day, and to speak to Quast instantly. "If it should be necessary," I said, "I will speak to the King, too. I will answer for you that you won't do anything silly, if they leave you in peace; that you'll not have any rows about the girl, or make any annoyances of any kind; and that in one or two years, perhaps, you will be ready to give up the affair of your own accord, and get married."

Oscar jumped up and flung his arms round my neck. He took me so suddenly that I could offer no resistance, and it was only when I felt his kiss that I tried to push him away. It was the pas-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

sionate kiss of a lover, and I was quite confused by it. But Oscar would not let me go for a long time. . . . At last I succeeded in freeing myself from him. He had entirely lost his head, stammered a word or two of thanks, and rushed away.

Now I am going to drive to Reihersburg, to put in a good word for him about his sweetheart! But if I had wanted to get him away from her, I had my opportunity to-day. It wouldn't take very much to make Oscar my slave.

Reihersburg,

July 2.

I HAVE kept my promise, and I tried honestly to make a success of it. But even from Quast I met with violent opposition.

"If your Royal Highness will permit me to express my opinion, I should advise you not to intervene in this affair. His Majesty is very much annoyed, and might take it ill if your Royal Highness were to speak of so unpleasant a topic."

Nothing that I could say to Quast had the slightest effect upon him, for he refused even to approach the King on the matter. So then I sent for Kapernick, an old, oily General, who has evidently enjoyed life to the full, and still has an eye for a pretty woman. But at Court he takes the pose of a mirror of virtue, a paragon; and that makes it uncommonly difficult to discuss anything with him. He, too, most decidedly advised me against any interference in this business, and said, moreover, "that Prince Oscar's only chance was absolute submission, and perfect obedience."

But as I had promised my cousin, I had to go on to the bitter end, and I sent in my name to the King, of course without saying anything to Johann

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

about it. But I had hardly begun my plea, when the King interrupted me.

"Does your husband know that you are pleading for Oscar in this affair?"

"No, Your Majesty," I confessed. "My husband is filled with too entire a deference for Your Majesty to permit me to make any appeal whatever to you, even if it were far more feasible and harmless than this one."

"Your husband," said the King, "has the proper feeling, and ought to be an example to you."

"Is Your Majesty displeased with me?" I asked with my sweetest and demurest smile.

The King answered, "You are always doing something fresh to destroy my confidence in you. What am I to think of a lady who comes to me with an appeal for a wanton on her lips?"

"I am not appealing for that person, Your Majesty," I said; "but for my cousin Oscar, whom I know better, perhaps, than any one else does at Court. He is treated with too great harshness; and if this person is now taken from him by force, it will not improve him, but only send him further astray. I will answer for him that he will cause no further annoyances in this connection, that he will behave as discreetly as possible, and that within a short time, he will dismiss the girl himself."

The King looked at me for a long time, and shook his head; then he said: "I do not understand you, Anastasia. You will 'answer for,' you can plead for, an arrangement so thoroughly cor-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

rupt? You stand up for a man who is conducting himself like a young beast! What views can you have upon morality, decency, religion, when you can speak to me like this? I feel that I am compelled to ask you—*‘who answers to me for you?’* Who is to certify me of *your* conduct, when you can speak as glibly and lightly of such things, as if they were the most every-day topics in the world?”

I turned red to the roots of my hair, but pulled myself together, and said, “Your Majesty will graciously consider that it is only on account of my solicitude for Oscar’s welfare that I suggest a temporary condonation of these irregularities. Oscar is not a beast—but he is desperate.”

“If he is ‘desperate,’” said the King, violently, “let him seek for strength and comfort where alone they are to be found—in prayer and holy conversation. Upon my word, this is something quite new! Every ‘desperate’ young man is to get a wanton to console him!”

“At least, your Majesty will give him another place of abode? Solitude is unbearable to him. If he were transferred, or allowed to travel for a while, he would more easily forget this woman.”

The King made a decided gesture intimating that further speech was in vain. “Oscar must learn blind, unconditional obedience. While he leaves it unlearned, he need not count on any kind of consideration from me. I deplore every word that you have said.”

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

So I went away rather crestfallen, and sent a short despatch to Oscar, telling him of the failure of my attempt, and recommending him complete submission. I am sorry for him, and I look forward with anxiety to future developments.

Reihersburg,
July 28.

AN overwhelming piece of news:—

Alexandrina is dead. As the report from Tutzenbach says, “after short, but most severe sufferings.” I can quite understand the meaning of that. I know that it is her monster of a husband who has practically murdered her. What a tragic fate!

I should like to talk to Rodl about it, but it isn't possible here. He has been but once a week, and on every occasion Stifter stuck to us like a burr the whole time.

The King is very cool to me again, entirely on account of the Oscar affair. They have really taken away this girl from the unfortunate fellow. Somebody went who knew how to manage that sort of thing, and he marched the police in on top of her while Oscar was in Barracks. They terrified the girl, then gave her some money, and spirited her off to Ebenstadt. Oscar is foaming with rage. He wrote me a frantic letter, and swears he will be avenged. I answered it and begged him to keep quiet, for these troubles could not last forever. He can't have got my letter, for

other, and I, therefore, conclude that Satan got hold of it. *That* doesn't matter to me, for every one may read what I wrote, and it is quite impossible that the King could find fault with my attempts at conversion. But what does vex me, what almost makes me ill sometimes, is to feel that I'm in the power of an insolent, mean creature like that. I shall think out some way of getting even with her.

Reihersburg,

August 5.

THANK Goodness, I have paid back Stifter! Lately, the Queen came to see the children, and when she wanted to chat with me in my boudoir afterwards, the Stifter woman withdrew a little, *a very little*, too slowly. Instantly I seized upon it as an excellent opportunity, and snapped at her: "Will you kindly leave the room? You can surely see that you are not wanted!" Stifter fled in tears, and the Queen was quite perplexed by it all. "My child," she said, "I am surprised at the way you treat that poor woman. One should always be kind and gracious to one's dependents."

"So I am, Your Majesty, to all the rest. But not to Stifter, and I have my very good reasons for it." And thus I killed two birds with one stone. Stifter had her reprimand, which she won't get over easily, for I know how touchy she is; and the Queen had a hint that I know what my Chief Lady-in-Waiting is up to.

But that did not satisfy me! Afterwards before Trisburg and the two nurses, I took the opportunity of giving Stifter another slap in the face. She was sitting there, looking like a martyr, and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I said to her: "I was sorry, dear Baroness, to be obliged to reprimand you, but really you ought to have more tact. *I* do not care in the least how much you spy upon me, or listen behind doors, but when her Majesty is here, you surely ought to know that such assiduities are out of place."

She began to cry again. But that left me quite unmoved, and I only said, "Now, dear Baroness, I am of a cheerful disposition, and I cannot stand whining. If what I have said to you really affects you so painfully, will you be good enough to withdraw, and do not return to my presence until you have done crying."

The creature swallowed all that without daring to say a word.

*Castle Mente,
September 12.*

THANK Heaven, the sojourn at Reihersburg is over. Rodl came there again, and we at last found an opportunity to talk of poor Alexandrina. My idea, that her husband was guilty of her death, is absolutely confirmed. Rodl heard all about it from his colleague there. She died in frightful agonies, and amid terrible imprecations on her husband. It is simply frightful.

I hear nothing of Oscar. But an idea has occurred to me which might turn out very well for him. How would it do if they married him to my sister, Melitta? She's a pretty, merry girl, something like me in character, and, to judge by my experiences, I have every reason to think that I am not unsympathetic with Oscar. I even spoke to Johann about it, but he thinks that it would never come off. The Menteburghs, he says, are already allied, through me, with Kressnitz-Memlingen, so now a fresh alliance must be sought. Besides, Melitta would not be the right *parti* for Oscar. She has no money, and neither has he. So she must make a good match, and so must he! All the same, I'll suggest it at Kressnitz; it might be worked from there.

Ebenstadt,
September 20.

CAME to town by order of the King; the reason was a mystery at first, but I was to find out soon enough—find out so definitely that I cried about it. Stifter has prepared her revenge with a sure hand. She has brought me into suspicion with the King, and chance came to aid her in her design.

Here is what happened. My husband got watchful all of a sudden. Used to inquire anxiously about my state of health, and finally summoned Rodl. He thanked him for the excellent treatment that he had given me, and asked him if my "cure" was to last much longer. He was charming to Rodl and, as Ferdinand is a splendid dissembler, Johann was made quite easy in his mind. Ferdinand explained to him that it very frequently happened, after the second confinement, that a woman developed organic disturbances and irregularities, and also that her form began to suffer. My two children had come tolerably near together, and a long, careful treatment had seemed advisable. Rodl also made a point of praising my great patience to Johann, and said, laughingly, that he hoped he should not have to

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

torment me much longer. Johann looked thoughtful, and then Rodl played a master-stroke. He begged to be allowed to ask Johann a question:

"Ask it, dear Professor," said Johann, graciously; "ask it by all means. What do you wish to know?"

"Has your Royal Highness been much inconvenienced by the long duration of the 'cure'?" asked Rodl. He must have looked very guileless as he said it, for Johann was entirely disarmed, and as he never *can* be moderate, he allowed himself to be beguiled so far as to show Rodl his hand quite plainly.

"Do you know, dear Professor," he said, "it is frightful how base people are. For some time I have been receiving anonymous letters about you and my wife. Of course, I am very far indeed from having any kind of suspicion, but you can understand that such rumors are not agreeable to me."

With that, the audience ended, but Rodl saw that Johann was very desirous that my "cure" should come to an end, as quickly as possible. So we shall have to arrange for secrecy again.

*Ebenstadt,
September 22.*

A CATASTROPHE! The King has intimated to Rodl that he is to leave off his treatment of me. And at the same time, poor Ferdinand is dismissed curtly and with evident disfavor. The King has sent me to Buchwald. I am to remain there till Christmas, "for the fresh air."

But as they were afraid that I might make some resistance, as on the occasion of my first banishment, the King came himself to announce it to me.

He was very quiet, and was evidently making a great effort to be moderate in his demeanor. "I desire," he said, "that you should remain for some time in the country, and be really set up by the fresh air, which will make up to you for the cessation of medical treatment. We might, of course, send for another Professor, but that would attract attention, and I wish to shield you from any publicity."

What could I do after that, but thank the King in my prettiest fashion?

They know nothing, nor have they any suspicion. Stifter has not yet plucked up courage to accuse me openly—but she certainly has managed cleverly enough to show me how dangerous she

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

can be. Well—we must hope it is only a passing disturbance of my intercourse with Ferdinand. Buchwald is only a short league beyond Rippach, so it ought not to be very difficult to meet now and then. I really don't so very much mind going out there, for I haven't hunted for so long, or even been on a horse's back.

Castle Buchwald,

September 24.

STIFTER deals me blow upon blow. I've been here a couple of days, and have ridden out once or twice. Up she came, so hypocritically, and said that riding could not possibly be good for me, especially now that my treatment had been broken off.

I was silly, and let myself go so far as to say to her: "You need not be at all uneasy. I am quite well."

She had me there, of course, and returned: "Your Royal Highness will forgive me, but it is my duty to be careful in such matters—and all the more since we have no medical advice at present."

She put deliberate malice into the concluding phrase. But I didn't know then what it was all meant for.

Two days later I was to learn. For she came in with open triumph in her malice, and told me that Privy Councillor Habermann awaited me, and was to examine me by His Majesty's orders. I was obliged to receive old Habermann—but, oh!

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I *was* furious, for, of course, he's Rodl's enemy, I was obliged to submit to the examination, and the result of it was that Habermann told me I was perfectly sound—there was nothing amiss with me, nothing whatever, and I could certainly ride if I wished.

With that he departed, and imparted his opinion in similar terms to the King. The King sent Quast out to me, and Quast finished the business by telling me that the King wished him to intimate to me that Rodl was a swindler, and had cooked up the case so as to give me longer treatment, and probably to give himself a good advertisement by his frequent attendance at Court. The King commanded me, in all future cases of necessity, to summon Privy Councillor Habermann, who was thoroughly trustworthy.

So I had to act a part which it sickens me to think of. I dared not let Stifter notice anything, for then I should have been lost indeed, and I had to deceive Quast as well, and pretend to be most indignant with Rodl, and very grateful to the King for his wise measures. I am beside myself; I am choking with rage. And the result of it all is, that Rodl has drawn back, and won't hear of anything more between us. Neither of a clandestine meeting, nor even of a correspondence. He is monstrosously frightened, and sent me an imploring message by Trisburg to send him no further communications. I don't know exactly what to think of this, or what he can be dreaming of.

Castle Buchwald,
November 16.

I AM still playing my part. I ride or walk daily, or drive in my carriage, or go out shooting with our old forester. I am outwardly happy, good-tempered, beaming with good spirits; I romp with the children, I sing them songs, I play the piano in the evenings—and at night I can drop the mask at last and cry.

That man Rodl is a positively abject creature, as I can't help seeing now. He gave me up instantly; and has never made the slightest attempt to continue a relation which was no longer of use to him, but, on the contrary, might possibly do him harm. How low I have fallen, and what sort of woman *can* I be after all? I have had two lovers, I have twice betrayed my husband, and yet I have nothing to reproach him with, except that he does not understand certain subtleties of my disposition; is perhaps somewhat too primitive, and is often too rough for me; and has a certain lack of culture which displeases my mental fastidiousness. For the rest, he is faithful to me, lets himself be guided by me, and is pliable as far as is consistent with his respect for the King. Can I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

blame him for that? He is dependent, and after all he has lawful rights over me. Can I blame him when I see how a man, to whom I have given and sacrificed so much, casts me off without a regret in his servile obedience, so soon as danger threatens?

Johann was here just now to see me and the children, and I was very sweet to him. He was quite astonished by it, but he also, as I thought, seemed to be extremely glad. So I've succeeded in one thing at any rate. I have got him completely on my side; I have spoilt Stifter's game; and this whole affair, which might have been most unpleasant for me, has passed off quite harmlessly so far. Certainly the disillusion I have suffered in the man I loved gives me some pain, and I should like to find an opportunity some time to pay him back for his mean conduct.

Johann has promised that I shall get over to Ebenstadt. I long to be at home again, for many reasons. In the first place, because the proposal to keep me here till Christmas must certainly have emanated from the hateful Stifter, and I should like to show her that, in the last resort, I am stronger than she. But besides, I am bored here, and I want to go to the Theatre again, and see people and have some amusement; and if I don't, I know I shall get frightfully nervous. And this year it will be a little livelier at Court, too, for we are not in mourning, and so there will be a couple of balls.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I might even manage to have a couple of parties myself, and, at any rate, I shall be able to dance a little again. For I must stun myself, as it were; I must teach myself to forget the utter desolation of my life. If I really (as the King once accused me) wanted to bid for popularity, I might go amongst the people, found societies and schools, do everything possible to get praised in the newspapers, and receive ovations wherever I go. But unfortunately that sort of thing is not to my taste. Mathilde would be the right person for that. She's always on her pedestal, always puffed up with pride and haughtiness, always playing the "Royal Highness."

*Ebenstadt,
November 20.*

THE King has permitted me to come home again. Stifter was very much astonished, and vexed, too. What I should like would be to go to the Theatre as soon, and as often, as possible, but I won't do it, for if I do they'll begin again to say I am too fond of amusement. At present, even the walks and drives and the shopping amuse me. It's a change, at any rate. If only I had more money, if only I need not be forever economizing, I should feel still happier. There are so many lovely things, and when the dressmaker or the milliner keeps showing me one tempting thing after another, I should like to buy and buy, and buy again. If I didn't keep a tight hand over myself,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I should soon have as many debts as a Lieutenant of the Guards. But it isn't so bad as that yet. And whenever I say to the shop-people, when they show me something or other, "I can't buy that," or "I have no money," they laugh in my face and say—"But, your Royal Highness. . ."

I've found a new amusement in my walks, for I now go about in the town itself. Trisburg comes with me, and we delight in it when I am not recognized; and when I am, we delight in it, too. People look so astounded when they see me going on foot, and that is such fun. They come towards one, thinking of nothing at all, look at one quite casually, and sometimes they even stare; then all of a sudden their faces change, they get an absolutely blank expression; and that is always such a great joke!

I have grown discreet—very discreet. What else can a twice-forsaken woman do? The things that used to make me so happy are now almost distasteful to me. I have been too bitterly disillusioned ever to make myself any illusions again.

Ebenstadt,

January 14.

SOMETHING very nice happened yesterday. I drove out with the children to the Rippach Wood, quite unsuspectingly, not knowing what was going on. Besides, I hadn't read a newspaper for some days. And just as I was at the end of the Lichtenburg Avenue, Stifter came tearing after me in a carriage, and conjured me to return instantly to the Castle by a different road, or at all events to take her brougham and give up my open carriage. This was what the matter was. There have been various disturbances in Ebenstadt during the last few days; the workmen, egged on by the Socialists, have struck. Political troubles are also involved in the affair, which I know nothing about. In short, at noon to-day, there was supposed to be a great demonstration coming off. The people were to come to the Palace and hold a meeting there, and the police were ordered out in force to prevent any deeds of violence. But, as always, the police found things out too late, and my carriage was hardly out of the Palace gates when the news came that great crowds were assembling in the streets. They sent over to say I was to remain in-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

doors, and the other Princes and Princesses were also informed. But whether it was that the weather was too fine, or that the others are not so democratic as I—at any rate, I was out of the house before the message arrived. Whereupon they put Stifter in a carriage and sent her after me.

I, however, am a Kressnitz, and it is not my way to fly from danger. I let Stifter yap away; and told her, first, that I should stay in my open carriage; and, second, that I should return through the heart of the town to the Palace. But I gave her the children, in case of accident, so that I should have no responsibility for them. The responsibility for myself I gladly undertook. And so I gave the coachman his orders. We went back at a quick trot, till we came to the Dominicanergasse. There a couple of mounted police accosted me, and beckoned the coachman to stop. But he had his instructions from me, and drove straight on. Then the mounted police rode one on each side of me, and insisted on, at any rate, so escorting my equipage. By this time we had come to the outskirts of the crowd. I called a halt, and told the good policemen that their guardianship seemed to me quite superfluous, and that I feared moreover that it might be provocative. I urgently requested them to remain behind. The crowd gathered closely round us, and watched, distrustfully I thought, to see what I would say to the Police Inspector, who bent from his saddle to

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

speak to me. But when the mounted guard remained behind, and my carriage began to drive quite slowly, and quite alone through their ranks, they understood me, and then it broke out like thunder—a cheering and hurrahing, and waving of hats, that did one good, and almost made one cry! The people made a line of their own free will all the way to the Palace, and greeted me along the road with as affectionate a cordiality as if they were not Socialist agitators at all. I came home in tremendous glee, and it was only in my own room that it occurred to me that the King might take this, too, amiss, and be angry with me again. But he hasn't—at least, nothing has occurred up to this moment. However, we shall see.

January 17.

THIS time it has turned out all right. The newspapers have had columns about the occurrence, and have remarked, in connection with it, that my appearance had an extraordinary pacifying effect, and that the ovations I had received had instilled a tone of good humor into the assembly which made any excesses or punishable outbreaks quite impossible. In some papers it says that the confidence I showed in the people will not be forgotten, and that that confidence is heartily reciprocated. The King is very much pleased with me, and said to Johann: "Of course, it was just like Anastasia; a silly prank, if one looks

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

at it closely—but it came at the right moment, and strengthened the dynastic sentiment in the people.”

That I had planned it all from the first, and that it only needed a very little pluck to carry it off, of course, nobody has an idea.

Ebenstadt,
March 6.

ONCE more I have fallen under the spell which already has brought me so much happiness and so much misery. What can I do? *C'est plus fort que moi!* Remorse is not in my nature—I have often said that before. I repent nothing of what is past, and I shall not now repent. On the contrary, I am happy, I live again. Now at last I am really myself once more. I know that.

This time it was I who fell in love at first sight. It was at the Court Ball, and to this day I can't understand how I managed to dissemble so cleverly that no one noticed anything. I saw him opening the dance with a little Countess. He struck me at once, and the more I watched him the more he charmed me. He is taller than any of the other men, very slim, with a singularly distinguished figure; fair and beardless. A very young man, almost like a girl. I asked Trisburg who that was. She found out that he was Baron Schwedenberg, one of the best dancers in the Army or at Court, and he was to be at the Private Dance too. I couldn't get his face out of my mind, and when at last the time for the private ball ar-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

rived, I entered the salon with only one thought—to see him and to get to know him. He was presented to me and I complimented him on his dancing. He smiled at me in reply, and I fell in love with him that instant. I longed to kiss his smiling mouth—so rose-red and so innocent! And his white, strong teeth shone out so when he smiled like that; and I longed to kiss his smiling eyes, too, so merry and so clear and blue. For the first time a man had such an effect on me that I conceived an incredible desire for him. I write this down, as it is—I am not ashamed. How could I be ashamed? for I think it is the most wonderful thing that can happen to one. While I'm writing these words I am trembling with longing for Egon. I remember so clearly the moment in which we first spoke to one another, that it seems to have only just happened; and I long for his kiss, his sweetness, and his love, as if I had not seen his charms for the first time only an hour ago!

He must have seen the impression he made on me; he must have read in my eyes how he attracted and allured me. For he got red and seemed embarrassed, which simply enchanted me. Then I danced with him. Oh, how shall I describe it? I can only tell what I did. I pressed his hand, and finally whispered to him, "I must speak to you somewhere."

And after that, there's very little more to tell. We meet at the house of Trisburg's old relative, and we meet every evening in the Theatre, for I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

have charged him to go wherever I go, and, as *he* hasn't got the special facilities for espionage that an Embassy affords, we make out my repertoire for a week in advance. I have given him a gold *porte-bonheur* which he is to wear, and from him I have a little pendant with a secret clasp, and his picture in the cover. I must be able to look at him from time to time, when I'm alone. He is the only man who has really set me on fire. I wish I had never belonged to anyone else. I wish I were pure, and undefiled, some little Countess or petty Princess, so that he might marry me. I write poetry on the sly, which I don't show to him, for he hasn't much taste for that kind of thing, and I'm dreadfully afraid of boring him.

He is a magnificent horseman, and we look forward to riding together in the Lichtenburg Avenue when the spring comes. If I could only manage to get him into our *entourage* somehow or other—get him some post at Court, or find some means of giving him constant access to me. Useless! He is so handsome, that it would not escape remark. I should only spoil my own bliss, and so I must put up with the various hindrances to our intercourse. If he only will be true! If he only will be true to me!

May 24.

How the weeks and months go by, when one is happy! I have never been so happy in my life. Certainly I have had some terrors, for Stifter seems to think everything I do extraordinary, and runs after me like the devil. And, certainly, I have sad moments, for in the hours that I cannot be with him (and how frequent they are!) I am totally cut off from him. I don't know what he does or where he goes. I get him to tell me, of course, how he spends his days; but he only tells me what he chooses to tell me, and I have to call up all my power of faith to keep myself from being racked with the most agonizing jealousy. He is far too handsome for women to leave him in peace. The only consolation I have is, he has no money, and therefore is a little shy.

We've found a splendid way of meeting in social circles also. His sister is married to Count Klinghardt, and the Klinghardts belong to the most exclusive set. I found out that the Countess bicycles, and intimated to her that it would give me pleasure if we could ride together. Of course, she acquiesced, and now we bicycle every day in the Lichtenburg forest—the Countess, her husband,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

and Egon. Klinghardt and Egon always wear civilian dress, so as to be less remarkable, and not to be recognized oftener than is inevitable. I delight in it, and am simply overflowing with happiness. For what could be more beautiful for me than to meet him every morning, quite early—to wake up, and know that I haven't got to wait until the afternoon or evening to see him?

The last couple of days we even bicycled from the Lichtenburg Avenue right up to the Palace. Quite casually, we went through the town, and the people were hugely delighted. Whatever I do delights the good folk of Ebenstadt. They like me, because they have never had such a human Princess before, and they look forward to having a gay, cheerful Queen.

Egon always laughs when I say that I'll make his career all right for him, when I'm Queen. But I can see that he likes it.

May 26.

YESTERDAY there was a little disaster. We rode back through the town again, and at the corner of the Clementinenstrasse, I got a side-slip on the wet pavement, and came down. I didn't hurt myself in the least, but my saddle was covered with mud, and I had to wait a little before I had a dry place to sit on. Of course it created a fuss; of course it was all in the papers; and of course I got another talking-to. There is to be an end to my bicycling. The King is raging again; and says

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

that they have no peace with me. Misfortunes never come singly. Egon is worried about money. He was so depressed these last few days—so despondent and absent-minded, that I got terribly uneasy, and imagined all sorts of horrors. At last I dragged out of him the admission that he was worried about money. He tried to evade me, and get out of telling, but of course that only increased my suspicions. When it was out, and I knew it was only money—wretched, dirty money!—I really breathed a sigh of relief. But I must see now if I can't help him. For the first time, I feel it a real misfortune that I am not rich. Goodness! what a joy it would be to take away all his worries; to offer him independence, luxury, and riches; to give him every desire of his heart! If I only were Queen, what power I should have, how easy it would all be! But, as it is, I can only scrape together the few coins I have, and I fear they won't be enough.

May 30.

IT was a difficult business, it cost me a hard struggle to get Egon to take the little I could offer him. But I did succeed at last, and now he is over the worst of his troubles. He is really very economical, but it's just the same with him as with me—one can't very well economize on nothing at all! And he had bad luck with a couple of horses, and then was induced to play. His sister could help him, for she married very well. But Count

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Klinghardt seems to be a miser, for Egon says that it would never enter his head to appeal either to him or to his wife. It would only cause friction in their married life, he says; and I think he is a dear, to think of it.

Now the time is coming again when I shall have to go over to Mente, and I am miserable at the thought of being separated from Egon. I don't know how I can bear it. There *is* a possibility of seeing one another off and on, for I think of inviting the Klinghardts to Mente. And if they were there, there could be nothing remarkable in Egon's coming out sometimes.

I hear nothing of Oscar—absolutely nothing! But they keep on saying here that he is degrading himself more and more, and giving his chiefs serious cause for complaint. But according to his version of the story to me, I can easily believe that these blessed chiefs only keep such a tight hand over him because they think they will get into favor by doing so.

Castle Mente,

June 12.

HERE again with the children; and Johann is spending a fortnight or so with us before he goes to the manœuvres. While he is here I cannot think of having the Klinghardts, and—! I have invited them for July. It is terrible to have to do without Egon. I suffer most dreadfully, and cry my eyes out whenever I look at his picture. The worst part is having my husband here. We are so far apart, our natures are so different, we are such utter strangers to one another, that he now tortures me; for all my tenderness, all my thoughts are with another. The most frightful part of this aloofness is the forced intimacy, against which I dare not defend myself, and which I cannot prevent, for Johann is quite without consideration in such matters, and I should only add to my other sufferings that of constant scenes with him.

June 24.

I TRY day and night to think out some pretext for going over to Ebenstadt, even if it's only for an afternoon. But it's useless, in any case, for I should have to take Stifter with me, and leave Trisburg with the children. I must only be satisfied with getting a little letter from Egon now and again, or sending him one by Trisburg. Besides, I shudder at the thought of anything being found out.

In the meantime, there have been two incidents here. First, Oscar came. He has managed to get an audience with the King. One of the regimental adjutants at Ringelheim is the son of the War Minister. Oscar prevailed upon him to use his influence with his father, and the War Minister spoke to Kapernick. And so at last Oscar got his permission to approach the King. Who would believe that a Royal Prince could require interest and backstairs influence before being able to speak to his Majesty! Well, Oscar came here, stayed two days with us, and goes to Reihersburg to lay his submission before the King. The only condition he makes is that from henceforth he is to be left at Ebenstadt.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

And something very peculiar came to pass between me and Oscar. We were sitting on the veranda after dinner; the gentlemen were smoking, and Oscar was lying opposite to me on a cane lounge; he was very silent and moody, although he had seemed in pretty good spirits at dinner-time. I asked him, "Do you feel nervous at the thought of your meeting with the King?"

He answered me, "I am thinking just now of something very different from the King."

I made a joke. "*Cherchez la femme?*"

And Oscar replied, in a strange, stifled voice, "*Parfaitement, Madam; cherchez la femme. . .*"

These few words were the signal for my husband's departure. He stood up and said, "Oh, you're talking French. That's too clever for me." And he went off and left us alone. I wasn't surprised at it at all, for Johann always goes off for an hour or two after dinner, to play dominoes with his adjutant, and drink.

So there we were, Oscar and I, alone on the terrace. It was growing dark, and the evening was perfectly exquisite. Oscar lifted himself up, and looked at me long and silently.

"Why do you look like that?" I asked him.

He gave me no answer, but went on gazing at me. And his sad, burning eyes made a most tremendous impression upon me, and all the longing that I had had so sternly to repress for days and days seemed to well up in my soul once more. I forgot Oscar, I forgot everything around me; I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

lay back in my chair, and gazed up at the evening sky. I was as if rapt away, lost in dreams. And so I did not notice that Oscar had risen, and come behind my chair, and was still gazing at me. I was startled by his bending down, with his face close above mine, glowing with passion; and I heard him whisper to me: "*Anastasie . . . cherchez la femme . . . vous êtes la femme . . .*" and, before I knew, his kisses were searing my lips. I cannot understand how it was—I can only suppose that my enervated mood, and the passion that was consuming me, made me lose my self-control. I was totally overcome by his embrace—so totally that I threw my own arms around him, and we kissed like two mad creatures. He must have felt instinctively the longing that had been consuming me for weeks; he must have felt the desperation of my whole being, for I have never seen a man so possessed. He did not know, of course, that the magnetism he felt emanating from my presence had nothing to do with him. We were both beside ourselves, and I have not an idea how long our embrace may have lasted. Some noise or other frightened us, we drew away from one another, and hastily I fled from the veranda to some place of safety. Nor did I appear again. I made the excuse of a headache, and stayed in my room till Oscar was gone. I was afraid of him; he could have done anything with me, in the state in which I was. It is horrible, when I think how nearly I was unfaithful to my Egon. Does Oscar love

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

me? I don't think so. I think it was only a momentary ebullition. I think it was his yearning for his sweetheart, and my yearning for mine, that drew us to one another on that lonely, lovely summer evening. Thank God that it went no farther.

The second incident was almost worse. Johann asked me suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, "You keep a Diary, don't you?"

I was so speechless with terror that he was quite startled by it.

"What's the matter with you?" he laughed. "I'm not doing anything to you!"

At last I brought out, "How do you know that?"

He said without hesitation, "Stifter told me." And then he went on, "Are there such dreadful things in it as all that? Mayn't I read it?"

I told him that it was quite true that I did take a few private notes. "As far as I'm concerned, you might see it," I said; "but it would not be nice of you to ask, for I intended my Diary for myself alone."

He was silent at that, but I could see that he was really curious, and that my answer put him out. That wretched creature! If I only knew how she discovered it. I did not delay in bringing her to book.

"When did you see my Diary?" I asked her.

"Never, your Royal Highness," was her reply.

"Then how do you know that I keep one?"

She said in a deferential tone that was full of

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

unspeakable indolence, "Very simply, your Royal Highness. I have often seen your Royal Highness writing in a book. Since I do not imagine that your Royal Highness is writing novels or poems, I conclude that it is a Diary."

"And you felt it your duty to accuse me of it to my husband?"

She answered me with the slyest look in the world. "My goodness, your Royal Highness, I never supposed that his Royal Highness did not know of it! How should I suppose that there was a secret between your Royal Highnesses? I should never have had the presumption! His Royal Highness merely asked me how the Crown Princess occupied herself; and then I spoke of bicycling, riding, walking, letter-writing, and naturally also of the Diary."

My fingers were itching to box her ears till they tingled again. But I restrained myself, and said, "Now listen! Since you are ordered to watch me and since you are base enough to lend yourself to the contemptible office of a spy in my house, there is nothing outside your instructions in your supervision of my outward conduct. But my Diary belongs to my intimate private life, and I warn you against trying to interfere with that. If you ever again have that insolence, if you ever again permit yourself to attempt any encroachment on my personal existence, I shall put you out-of-doors like a bad servant!"

She turned as white as chalk and hissed at me,

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

"Your Royal Highness cannot dismiss me. Only his Majesty. . . ."

But I cut her short, and cried, "I'll put you out on the spot if you say another word. Whatever happens then is my affair, and I take the responsibility for it. Whatever his Majesty may do to me, *you* need not have any anxiety. Leave the room at once."

She was almost fainting, and only gasped, "It is very easy for your Royal Highness to insult a defenceless woman."

"You are not defenceless. You are like a viper that stings one in the heel," I answered.

It is so particularly pleasing, the way in which such people, when they have made one furious, appeal to one's rank, and seem to think it "so unfair" (Heaven save the mark!) if one frankly expresses one's opinion of them!

Since then we are foes, she and I—far more deadly foes than hitherto.

Castle Mente,
July 17.

THE Klinghardts have been with me for a week, and Egon has been four days in Menteburg, and comes up every day to play tennis and bicycle with us. But I cannot be quite happy, for I feel as if I had caught Egon in an untruth. Before he actually came, I had a long talk with his sister about him—about his chances, and his situation. And she told me that he had great difficulties about money; that he was not economical, but was loaded down with debts; and that already she had made many serious monetary sacrifices for him.

I remembered how Egon had told me that he could not, and would not, take anything from his sister, and I felt such a pang at this palpable contradiction that I blushed violently. She must have noticed, for she tried to explain away what she had said; and when, later on, I introduced the subject of Egon's conquests among women, she gave me only evasive answers, and would not be "drawn" at any price.

I think now, too, that the Klinghardts have noticed something, for they always manage to leave Egon and me alone when we are bicycling.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

And when we are at home they manage also to leave me alone with Egon. It suddenly occurs to the Countess to look after the children; and then the Count gets Stifter out of the room on one pretence or another—in short, we profit by this contrivance, or discretion, whichever one chooses to call it. And ah! what wonderful hours do we spend in some distant corner of the Park, or here in my room, or out in the forest. These short moments of tenderness, snatched from the passing hours, make up to me for all the deprivations and sufferings of the past weeks. Only often, when I'm alone with Egon, my heart is as heavy as lead to think that I suspect him of a lie, and I'd give anything to ask him about it; but I can't bring myself to do it—I don't dare, and in reality I am right not to. However it turned out, it would give him a bad impression. If I am wronging him, he would be angry with me, and think it indelicate of me, since it was I myself who assisted him. And if I *have* caught him in a lie, he would be ashamed of himself, and would avoid me. So, either way, I should be the loser, for I love him, whether he lies to me or not.

Castle Mente,

July 22.

I HAVE been very curtly ordered to come to Reihersburg. The message fell like a thunderbolt into the beauty of my happy days. The Klinghardts seem to have been alarmed, for they took leave hastily and carried off Egon at such speed that we weren't even able to say good-bye. Of course, it's another mean trick of Stifter's, who must have denounced me.

What a frightful life I lead! When I think that I've been living here some years now, that I am Crown Princess, and yet that I haven't got a single friend! My hopes that a little party would rally round us when poor Wolf Ulric died, and we were next in the succession, have proved completely false. There are no friends for us. We must put it out of our heads. Of course, I shall have any amount of friends when once I am Queen. But then I shan't want them. In the meantime people are far too wily to stand by us openly, or run the smallest risk for us. And where should we seek our friends? In *bourgeois* circles? Quite apart from the fact that we cannot have any close intercourse with that class, I had too instructive an

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

experience with Rodl. Shall we seek for them in the family? I should like to know whom I could select as a friend out of them all! Oscar, with whom I have had some cordial and friendly intercourse, is the only possible one—and he has enough to do to look after himself. Besides, he would want to be my lover—for which I am infinitely obliged to him, I am sure! Among the aristocrats, then? Perhaps, with luck, one might find a man or two amongst them. I have not succeeded in doing so. So far as I can see, there are only two kinds of aristocrats. One kind are looking out for office at Court, from motives either of poverty or avarice; and the other kind are rich, and only come to Court for amusement. So it would be very difficult to choose! Court nobility is really very little more than a superior kind of servant class. They are simply people who flatter us, and put us in leading strings, or regard us merely as the important pieces in their game. Every one of them is false, every one heartless; behind their smooth civility there is nothing but the commonest intrigue. No, no! There's nothing to be done with these gentry. We are entirely in their hands, and the only alternative to their being our creatures is that we should be theirs. And the great nobility—the *haute noblesse*—are simply off their heads with sheer arrogance. It is frightfully difficult to get on, with them, for this class, again, are idiotically touchy and arrogant, and each illustrious member of it considers

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

that he is almost demeaning himself by approaching us. It's nothing but prerogatives, privileges, claims to all kinds of exemptions and attentions—an everlasting problem, an eternal stumbling-block, for the Master of Ceremonies, who has to beat his brains to devise some means of contenting all their Highnesses. And if they happen to consider themselves of older origin, or bluer blood, than the Royal Family—there's simply no standing them.

There remains, the clergy! But I haven't got the right knack with them; and in any case it would not be a friendship, but a kind of business arrangement. I should be obliged to alter my whole manner of living, my opinions, my manners—and lead a sort of cloistered existence, serve them “as a shining light in these godless times;” then, no doubt, they would be prepared to place at my disposal their influence and their powerful intervention.

So I have only Trisburg—and again, only Trisburg! And if it wasn't expressly laid down in the marriage settlement that Trisburg is under my sole control—and under nobody else's!—and that she can only be dismissed by me, the King would long since have torn her from me, and sent her back to Kressnitz or Memlingen. For she is a thorn in his side.

Reihersburg,

August 20.

A FEARFUL calamity has come upon me. I am in the hands of Stifter. If she chooses, she can destroy me—but what does that matter now? She has done her worst, and her worst is the worst that could befall me.

I was received at Reihersburg with freezing coldness. They treat me like a criminal. My husband was here for a couple of days, and he let fall some remarks which frightened me horribly. He said that he thought nothing of being betrayed—he was prepared for *that*; but it was horrible for him to learn such news from the King. He didn't like to seem like a fool to the King. No one would believe how I suffered under all that. I went about in constant terror. I couldn't eat, and I couldn't sleep.

The next day there came a new horror from the King. I am only to see my children at certain fixed hours, and Stifter is always to be present. I used to spend every free minute with my little angels, and at least in my nursery I was safe from unpleasantnesses. But now they behave as if I should infect my children in some way—as if I

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

were not fit to be their mother. I didn't take it quite quietly, but, alas, alas! my conscience is not so pure as it used to be, and my old courage has deserted me. Perhaps the reason why I'm so weak and craven is because of this trouble about Egon, which has so upset me. But at any rate I lay in wait for the King, and asked him why I was not allowed free access to my children as formerly. He looked at me piercingly, and answered very coldly, "You are not fit company for growing children. You live a godless life." I asked him what he meant by that, to which he replied, "Godless; surely that is plain enough. You are a woman who lives without God. And any one who does that opens the door to the Devil—and the Devil's herald is Sin. You are frivolous and coquettish, and care for nothing but amusing yourself." And, coming closer to me, he added, "Indeed, you are actually a wife who forgets her duty. Heaven knows what you may have been doing in secret!"

That was more than I could stand, and I burst into tears. The King can't bear to see anyone crying, so he said hastily, "Prove to me that you are sorry for your sins and wish to improve and then you shall have your children again." With that he went off, and left me standing there.

I puzzled and puzzled in the most wretched anxiety over the new turn of affairs. I racked my brains to guess what they could know that they should dare to treat me like this. After a couple

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

of days I took heart, and insisted on going to the children—I broke into their room, and stayed there the whole day. I wanted to see what would happen; I wanted to call down my fate upon my head. I felt I could bear anything if I only knew where I was, but that this uncertainty was driving me mad. In the evening, the King walked into my room unannounced, and instantly attacked me.

“If you ever again presume to act against my commands, you shall feel my whole strength, in its full severity. I have tamed wilder creatures than you; and I shall know what to do with you also.” He cut me short every time I tried to answer him, and I could see that he was in a white-hot rage.

“Don’t try to trifle with me,” he cried. “You need count on no indulgence. I shall send you to Hirschwaldau, quite alone, without your children; and then we shall see what you’ll do.”

Hirschwaldau is a little, quite neglected palace, in the middle of a small park surrounded by high walls. Nobody lives there; only now and again one of the family may spend a night if he’s hunting in the neighborhood, or if there are manœuvres. Hirschwaldau is a prison, and a century ago, a Royal Mistress *en titre* was left languishing there till she died. When I heard the name, Hirschwaldau, I felt a cold shiver down my back. When the King was gone, and I had got a little more composed, I sent for Stifter. I wanted to play a big card—and play it *then*, that instant; I wanted to have a real tussle with someone.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I was quite calm when she came in, apparently perfectly composed; but she shrank back the moment she saw my cold, stony resolution. I went towards her, and said, "What has happened that I am treated in this way?"

She shrugged, and was silent. I went quite close up to her, and repeated, "What has happened?" But again she shrugged, and said nothing. Then I turned, went to both doors, and locked them, one after the other. Then I went to my writing table, pulled out the drawer, and took from it my little revolver.

"Stifter," I said, "you do not leave this room alive unless you tell me all the truth. I know that you betray me. I know that you denounce me. That is your office, and I make you no reproaches on that score. But I will know what has taken place. I will know of what you accuse me?"

She stood there, immovable; once more shrugged, looked at me boldly, and laughed. That laugh put me beside myself.

"I'll shoot you down like a mad dog!" I shouted. "Answer me!"

Then she said coolly, "Put your revolver away. It does not frighten me in the least. I will tell you freely what has occurred, if you don't already know it yourself."

At first I didn't notice that she addressed me simply as "You." But then I attacked her.

"Whatever may have occurred, I am, and shall always be to you—'Her Royal Highness!'"

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

She smiled again insolently, and said, "Very well. But if I am to speak, put away that revolver. I shan't say a syllable under compulsion."

I threw the revolver back into the drawer, and she came quite close to me. "Do you know this?" she asked, and, like lightning, held up a little golden ball in front of me. I instantly recognized the pendant that Egon had given me, and which I had missed for two days. And I was paralyzed with terror.

Stifter reiterated, "Do you know this?" snapped the secret spring, and showed me Egon's picture.

"Where did you get that?" I asked, choking with shame and fear.

"That is of no consequence. It is merely the last incontrovertible proof, and came lately into my hands. I knew long ago what was going on."

"And you have——"

"I have done my duty to both sides."

I was so distraught that I hardly knew what she was saying. But gradually I began to understand the state of affairs. She had found out the whole thing at Mente, and had spoken to Egon half an hour before our departure. Egon is a distant connection of hers, and the son of her best friend. It was entirely on his account, not on mine, that she had held her hand. For her friend's sake, and to spare Egon, she said no more at Reihersburg than that I was trying very hard to lead astray the young Baron Schwedenberg, that I was carrying on a desperate flirtation with him, and that some-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

thing ought to be done at once to separate us and to restore me to my duty. So then, when the order came from Reihersburg that we were instantly to go to Court, so as to pass the rest of the summer under the King's own eye, she had an interview with Egon and easily got from him all she wanted to know. She made him give his word of honor as an officer never to approach me or come into my vicinity again, to break off all relations with me, and to burn my letters. On these conditions she consented not entirely to destroy me, and to tell only half the truth.

"This little picture," she said in the end, when she had told me the whole story, "will remain in my hands in case your Royal Highness should again feel any inclination to turn me out of doors like a bad servant."

With that she turned and left me, and I could do nothing but shriek and cry, and bite my handkerchief to pieces, and be unhappy.

The question is, how long am I going to stand it? Just now I'm so utterly shattered and broken down that I cannot decide anything, or even think of anything to decide.

*Reihersburg,
September 8.*

THE King has ordered me to begin some devotional exercises in the Ursuline Convent. I have to drive out from here at six o'clock every morning in the closed carriage (it's an hour's drive), and attend a Mass there, and then perform some lengthy devotions with the Superior. And I am closely watched that I may not eat anything, but fast strictly until I return from the convent.

Stifter goes about with her head in the air, and does not conceal her exultation over me, even from the lackeys. My husband treats me with a kind of mild contempt, but does not forego his marital rights. I am so bitterly humiliated that I cannot hold up my head at all. I look piteous and lamentable; I long for my children. I cry whenever I think of Egon, and yet I have such a horrible fancy about all that—I cannot get rid of the suspicion that it was all a long-prepared intrigue. The frightful idea comes into my head that the whole affair with Egon was instigated by Stifter so as to get me into her power. I feel degraded in soul and body, and I curse the day that brought me to Ebenstadt, to this Court, and this family.

*Ebenstadt,
September 22.*

HEAVEN be thanked, for it has found me the means of escape from my tortures. I am in a certain condition. Now at last they have to make up their minds to treat me better, now they believe they are safe from me, now they reckon upon my being a good mother again. Or perhaps they are only careful of their brood, and foster me like a pregnant animal that I may bring forth lustily. Be that as it may, I feel that my chains are loosened, and I can breathe freely. Slowly I became aware again of what has been going on in the outside world. And now, at last, I have been told how Oscar's audience with the King went off. It was one of the most fearful scenes that has ever taken place in the family. Oscar begged the King to be allowed to be stationed at Ebenstadt, and, on that condition, promised improvement and submission. The King was very short with him, and said that he did not recognize a condition obedience. Oscar replied that he would make no condition—but he could not stand life in that small garrison town, and he knew he could not improve and quiet down anywhere but in Ebenstadt. The King then

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

attacked him with, "Of course you want to come to Ebenstadt—but it's only because there are greater facilities here for making a beast of yourself than anywhere else." Oscar was annoyed and said he had never made a beast of himself except when the treatment he had to submit to forced him to do so. But the King shouted at him, "You are a beast, and you shall stay where you are!"

Then Oscar's temper naturally got up, he clicked his heels together, drew himself up to his full height and said, "I must tell your Majesty that I will not suffer injurious epithets." The anger and surprise of the King were boundless. "*You* won't suffer? . . . *You?* . . . I'll show you, you, young cur, you!" And with that the King raised his hand and made as if to strike Oscar. But Oscar sprang two steps back in a fury, and roared, "Don't dare to touch me! If I have to shoot myself down on the spot afterwards, I'll defend myself now with my sword if you attempt to strike me!"

The King was petrified for a while, then he rang for Kapernick, and yelled at Oscar, "You are under arrest. Under arrest, I say!"

Oscar unbuckled his sword and threw it at the King's feet, just as Kapernick entered. He was taken back to his room, and told that he was not to leave it without permission. The King sent a message by telephone to the War Minister, and there was a session. What they cooked up nobody knows; but Oscar was informed that he was

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

not to return to his former station, but was to go that same night to Ullrichstein. Castle Ullrichstein belongs to Oscar, and he lives there now like a prisoner. The officials and officers are forbidden to have any intercourse with him. What further will be done to him I don't know. But I can see now why the King was so furious when my affair came just on top of Oscar's, and why he instantly took such severe measures with me.

I make good use of my present situation, and I said to Councillor Habermann that distraction was very necessary for me in my condition, and hinted to him at the same time that I was afraid of getting melancholia. He then explained to me at great length that that state frequently did supervene, and that it was merely a question of the melancholy attendant upon pregnancy. The old gentleman doesn't, of course, know how many other causes there are besides; but he duly made his report to the King, and so I am to a certain extent taken back into favor "by medical advice!" And I may go to the Theatre again.

Ebenstadt,

October 25.

I REALLY meant never to open my Diary again. Everything in me seems dead and done for. Even going to the Theatre has not succeeded in refreshing me. I just live on from one day to another, and grow stupider and stupider. If it goes on I shall soon become quite a genuine member of the family, and, perhaps, even a favorite with them all! But now I don't take any interest in whether people like me or not, or what they think of me. As yet, however, I am not so entirely vanquished that I cannot resent insults; and as I have nobody to confide in, I must open this book again, where all my joys and sorrows lie buried.

The King of Memling has been on a visit here. A quite private, purely friendly one, just to return the visit of the King of Menteburg at the time of my betrothal at Memling. It was supposed to be merely for the purpose of "accenting the connection of the families." I am "the connection!" And that was the occasion they selected for openly insulting me. It was inevitable that I should be in the Queen's drawing room when my Royal uncle arrived from Memling. But he spoke first

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

for a very long time to the Queen—then passed me by, and talked to Mathilde. After this first affront I knew that the three days of his stay were to be made a series of annoyances and humiliations for me. At the gala dinner in the evening the King of Memling took our Queen, and, whether he liked it or not, our King had to take me. He did it—and never spoke a word to me the whole time. I sat at table, utterly ignored. The conversation went over my head and across my nose—and the next day, too, at the gala performance, the King of Memling managed to treat me as if I were not there. Instead of resenting with me, and for my sake, the cruel injustice that is being done me, Johann is always extra-offended with me, and begins to treat me contemptuously too. I am thrilling with an indignation that I cannot describe. What hideous cruelty it is to torment a woman in my condition in such a way; and how heartless, too, to pass me by and not say one word to me of my home and my people.

I have debated with myself what to do. First I wanted to beg the King of Memling for a private audience, tell him of my position, implore his intercession, and obtain from him a better treatment of me during his stay, in public at any rate. But then again, I felt I wanted to defy them, and stay away from the family gatherings and all the gala arrangements too. And unfortunately I have no one to advise me, and so my defiant spirit won the day. I excused myself from the family dinner, and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

I did not appear at the leave-taking either. My condition makes a passing indisposition very plausible. The family dinner! It is laughable to think of the part I should have had to play at that—and for me to appear at the leave-taking would really have been farcical. Why should I “take leave” of a man who had no word of greeting for me at his arrival, and who, I suppose, would not have had one of farewell either? Now, at any rate, I have set my own seal to the breach. I’ve shown them that I’m not so craven, not so utterly beaten down as they apparently desire. And Johann really made it all the easier for me, by coming rushing to me, as soon as my excuse had reached the King, to beg me to change my mind. And then we spoke out to one another for the first time, and so dreadfully plainly that I got convulsions from excitement, and Habermann had to be fetched, for they feared there might be a *fausse couche*.

I said everything that was on my mind. I pointed out to my husband his own vacuity, his thoughtlessness, his ignorance, his personal roughness to me. I said, “What an overpowering honor it is for me, to be sure, to belong to this family! Such people as you are! If you weren’t princes you would be criminals! A delightful set of men and women! Eric, who in my opinion is just a stock-jobbing legacy-hunter! Oscar, who tumbles about in the streets with wantons! Moritz, who plays the saint, and makes love to operetta singers! The Queen, who is suffering from re-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

ligious mania; the King, who thinks of nothing but the meanest chicaneries upon his people, and who is so insignificant that he instinctively envies anyone who seems wiser or better than himself! A fine King, truly, who can only play the despot at home, because he dares not practice any more tyrannies in his kingdom, unless he wants to be hunted out of it by the people, the Deputies, and the Ministers! So he plays the tyrant here, in the women's apartments. If you think I am taken in by it all you are very much mistaken."

Johann was simply struck dumb, and it was easy to see for the hundredth time that I am far too superior to him to be able to let him lord it over me. I was well started off, and I went on: "Whom am I to respect here? What is there to make me happy in your house? Everything that happens here, everything that I see around me, is petty, mean, hypocritical, or idiotic. I am surrounded by spies in my own apartments. Paid thieves steal my ornaments, paid burglars hover round my writing table, paid jailers keep me from my children. My children! They were the only things I had to make me happy; the only things that might have influenced me for good—but these people kill all the good in me! I sit forlorn in my room, and whimper like a dog whose puppies have been weaned from her. And that—*that* is the Crown Princess of Menteburg! And you dare to reprove me! You dare to ask me to expose myself to further insults!"

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Johann could think of nothing in reply but abusive epithets. But I had talked myself into such a state of mind in my misery that I had another convulsion.

And now, it is all over. Now I am resolved to do everything that can irritate the others. Now I am resolved to live only for myself and my desires. I don't care what happens.

November 24.

It is gradually getting known that I am in disfavor, and am unkindly treated. Articles are appearing in the papers which hint at my conflict with the King; and wherever I show myself in public, the people make a point of testifying to me of their sympathy.

I have had a lamentable letter from Mamma, with a lot of good advice for becoming reconciled with the King. For the first time I have written to her curtly, and said that she must not meddle in things which do not concern her, and which she does not understand.

I heard yesterday that Oscar has been put in the Institution for Nervous Diseases at Ginsterbach. Now they want to pronounce him mad, and then they will bury the poor young man in a madhouse. It is simply a murder. But Oscar's fate should be a lesson to me. I see what lies before me.

*Castle Mente,
December 6.*

THIS time I sent myself into banishment. My condition causes me to have to come so much in contact with the family, and I have been so upset by the King's conduct towards me, that I couldn't stand it any longer; and after consultation with old Habermann, I finally intimated that I wished to withdraw to Castle Mente for the rest of my pregnancy. Of course it was forbidden. But I made short work of that, and went, unannounced, to the King. Right into his room I went, past General Kapernick, who tried distractedly to restrain me. But since nothing matters to me I have courage enough for ten! The King stared at me as if I were a spectre, when I suddenly stood before him and said, "You will not permit me to go to Mente?" He answered me only by saying, "Who allowed you to come in here?" But I replied, "I shall not detain you long. I merely wish to say to you that if you prevent me from going to Mente I shall do something that will set the whole world talking."

The King looked at me and said, "Why do you wish to go to Mente?"

I was overjoyed by the question, for now I could

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tell him the plain truth. "Why do I wish to go to Mente? Because I have had enough of being ill-treated by people I despise. Because I am a Kressnitz, and my pride will not endure insults from a family which ought to consider it an honor that I belong to it. Because I wish to be alone, or else in the company of people who suit me."

He was quite pale, for he could not help seeing that the overstrung bow had snapped, and that any fresh mistake of his might bring on a crisis. So he could think of nothing to say but, "Then *I* don't suit you?"

And promptly I answered, "No!" A pause ensued, and then the King said, "You can go to the Devil. It's nothing to me whether you are at Mente, or Ebenstadt, or where you are."

I retorted, trembling with indignation, "That is the unmistakable Royal language—the Mente-burg tone towards women."

Upon that the King said, with much emphasis, "Your Royal Highness can go wherever you please, but your Royal Highness will be good enough to leave your children here in Ebenstadt."

That was the end of my self-control. "If you try to steal my children from me I will leave the country. I will appeal to the President of the French Republic, or to the Federal Council of Switzerland, for ordinary protection. I will provoke a scandal—an unprecedented scandal!"

"And I'll lock you up in a madhouse," the King interrupted.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

"That is your custom," I said, very loudly. "You have already sent *one* sane young man to a mad-house; and you can do it with impunity, because you are the King. If any other man committed such a crime, he would go to prison for it!"

The King sprang up, stretched forth his hand, and said, "Out of my house!"

But I did not stir. I cried loudly, "Can I take my children with me? Yes or no!"

He rang, and repeated categorically, "Out of my house!"

Then once again I had a convulsion, just as I have often had, and I began to scream and howl like a wounded animal, and was all contorted. Six lackeys had to carry me back on a sofa to my apartments. Two days later I was allowed to come here *with* my children! And now they shall never set eyes on me again at their Court, of my own free will. I am decided. It is war to the knife.

Of course this affair got out too; and Trisburg, who gets letters from the capital, tells me that everyone is talking about it, and that everyone is furious with the King.

*Castle Mente,
January 26.*

I REFUSED to go to Ebenstadt for Christmas I refused to receive my husband here on Christmas Eve. It was only after long parleyings that I consented to his coming to Mente for the present giving and the Christmas dinner. I left his Christmas presents to me lying under the Tree, and forbade any of them to be taken into my rooms. And as the things couldn't be left lying about, I had them all sent to Ebenstadt, to a Benevolent Society, which will sell the whole lot, and give the money to the poor.

I refused to go to the family dinner at Ebenstadt on New Year's Day. And I'm living here quite quietly, just as I desire. I send for every book I want, and I've subscribed to a couple of modern periodicals. I am reading Harden's "Die Zukunft," at which they would be deeply shocked in Ebenstadt, but which amuses me enormously. Stifter treats me like a patient who is not quite right in the head, and who must be humored in everything. I never speak to her, and if she asks me anything that demands an answer I give it her through Trisburg.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Castle Mente,

April 5.

A CALM, quiet winter lies behind me. I was very wise to retire from the scene. I escaped the worst of the unpleasantnesses, and at least I have my children entirely to myself again. For the arrangement that the King attempted last year couldn't possibly have gone on in our small *ménage*, and Stifter, indeed, soon abandoned any attempt at keeping it up.

Castle Mente,

June 3.

I HAVE a son. After a long, painful confinement—a little, weak, white thing! No wonder, after all I've gone through. If I had been as well as I was before, I would have insisted on nursing this little baby. He is called Karl, and has a lot of other names besides—pure Menteburg, which don't interest me. But I shall be able to call him Karl, my father's name and my brother's—and that makes him all the dearer to me. The christening was very quietly done by the clergyman at Mentendorf. A couple of days before my actual confinement I had expressly said that I would have no one from Ebenstadt at the christening, or to visit me during my illness. That was another good idea! For most likely no one would have come in any case; and then I should have regarded the quiet christening as a fresh insult, and would have got silly and excited about it, while now it is the Menteburg gentry who are angry! My husband is here, and we have patched up a sort of reconciliation.

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

Castle Mente,

July 12.

THE King has commanded me to Reihersburg on July 15. And Trisburg has found out that they are attempting a slight *rapprochement*, because my position in the Royal Household is getting talked about, and causing general disapproval. And the affair with Oscar, too, has displeased the crowd. He certainly is not beloved by the people, to whom he is a *bête noire*; but some intelligent folk have discovered a connection between his being shut up in a madhouse and my being absent from Court, and have drawn conclusions from it which are not agreeable to the King. That's why I am to join them at Reihersburg, and play the part assigned to me in that delightful comedy, "The Happy Family!" I won't do it, at any price.

July 28.

DESPITE my situation I have some wit left, and so it occurred to me—as an answer to the imperative Royal invitation to Reihersburg—to request that I might be permitted to go to Hirschwaldau. Nobody had expected *that*, and they were all frantic. But they knew very well what I meant them to read between the lines of my petition: That even the dark and lonely castle prison of Hirschwaldau was preferable to a stay at Court, under the King's supervision. And they see now that I am ready to go of my own free will where the

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

King wanted to send me last year for punishment, so that they can do nothing more to me—I am not afraid of them. To this circumstance I owe the fact that I am permitted to stay at Castle Mente, without any further discussion.

Ebenstadt,

October 3.

THEY have got me back. They thought out an excellent way of forcing me to return to the Residence. It was arranged that my father should come on a visit there, and of course I could not absent myself from that occasion.

But the King, remembering my first entry to Ebenstadt, was afraid that I should again have a great reception, and the Police did ferret out somehow that when I was again seen in the capital it was intended to give me a demonstrative greeting. Therefore no announcement of my coming was made, and I arrived at a late hour of the evening. And in the Gazette there was merely a short paragraph to say that I had arrived at Ebenstadt. But it was no good! For when, on the day of papa's arrival, I drove to the station, the people shouted themselves hoarse; and the King, who drove behind me, was received in freezing silence. Only his claque, and his detectives, attempted a couple of cheers, but nobody joined in. I could not control myself when I drove through the streets of Ebenstadt again, after such a long time, and found myself greeted so kindly, and with such evident affection. The tears sprang to my eyes

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

and ran down my cheeks, and when the people saw that they got more enthusiastic than ever. And then, when my father came, I threw myself, sobbing, into his arms, there, on the very steps! There was very nearly an unpleasant scene over that, but my poor papa got frightened, pushed me aside, and hurried to join the King's group.

Well! I have had a serious talk with my father. I could confide in him; he understands me, he has compassion on me; but he cannot help me. He consoles me for the future by saying that everything here is but a passing show. But I am far too young to get any comfort from that. And in my turn I had to hear of all the anxieties which weigh upon poor papa. The King of Memling has charged him to bring me to my senses. My mother had enjoined him to be very strict with me; and our own beloved monarch had told him that he would be glad if "my father could set my feet in the right path once more;" but otherwise he was quite resolved to adopt very stringent measures.

My father asked if it was true that I had had a lover, and I frankly confessed that I *had*. He was very much horrified, and very much grieved, for a moment. Then he got extraordinarily confused, shook his head, said "Yes . . . yes, yes . . ." and began to speak of something else. After he had got through the usual programme of amusements he departed; and it was only when, on bidding me good-bye, he took my head between his hands and kissed me, that I realized the anxiety that the poor old man feels about me.

Ebenstadt,
November 17.

As soon as my father had gone I wanted to return to my solitude. But I was tempted to stay on, for the sake of the few pleasures that I had had to forego for so long. I went to the Theatre, and to some concerts, and I visited the picture shows, so as to fill my head full of delightful impressions before I went back to the country.

And *then*—my fate found me again. At the picture show I was received by the Director, who hastened up to lead me round. One picture pleased me particularly. A superb mountain landscape, broadly and finely treated—a country which reminded me of Kressnitz, and so attracted me especially. I asked about the artist, and the Director answered, “He is a young foreign painter,” and, looking round, he added, pointing to a young man, “He is here now. Your Royal Highness can see him.” I looked at him. He had a pale, thin face, with a small black mustache, wild black eyes, like a Greek, and long black hair. He looked distinguished in his great blue cloak, like a bandit’s, and his slouch hat. He pleased me at once. The Director asked if he might present the young ar-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tist to me, for he saw I was interested, and wanted to please me. Herr Richard Rogger came towards me with great composure, and a certain quiet self-confidence. I began with the orthodox questions, "Where had he studied?" "Did he live permanently in Ebenstadt?"—and so on; and I liked his soft, musical voice, and his big, intelligent, eloquent dark eyes magnetized me, as it were. I entered into a long conversation, and in the end I requested him to come to the Castle and show me his portfolio of sketches. He came, we talked, and I asked him if he ever painted portraits. We arranged that he should paint me, and he made the preliminary sketch in my room. But after that I had to go to his studio, because it has the only light that is possible for painting a large portrait. And there, in his studio, I have now for long lived glorious hours again. I don't ask how long it will last, nor what is to happen. I don't even care if we are found out. I am resolved to do what I like, and bear the consequences. I go to him with Trisburg, who then remains alone in the studio; and I sometimes drive there, quite unaccompanied, in a hired carriage. That's when I can manage to steal away from home without being noticed.

Two years ago I could not have listened to Richard's opinions without being profoundly offended and very angry. But now, I can't help agreeing with him. He says the most dreadful things to me about my rank. He says that any

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

working woman in Paris, or anywhere else, who suckles her children and tends them, and fights beside her husband as his comrade in the struggle for existence, is a higher type of human being than we are. He tells me that a time will come when we shall be hunted out, as we were from France. The things he says about the men in our circles are abominable, but true. His opinions on our family lives are true, I know, for I've had my own experiences. I'm always most tremendously stirred up and exhilarated when I come away from him. I didn't know that so many people were against us as he says there are. But Richard says I must believe him.

"If it's true," I ask him, "why do the people cheer me wherever I go?"

"Because you are charming to look at. Because you are the incarnation to them of all that they long for—goodness, gaiety, youth, and beauty. And then, too, because they know that their cheering annoys the King."

"Do they know that?" I asked.

"Every child knows it," he told me. And then I had to listen to my own supposed history. I heard how many lovers I am supposed to have had—men to whom I have never given a thought; some, even, whom I don't know personally.

Richard often asks me about my past life. He is jealous, and writhes at the things I confess to him; and I admit that it gives me infinite pleasure to see him writhe—it's such a proof of his love!

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

When he notices that he says, "It is a blessing that you're a Princess, and that so I don't take our love affair seriously, but merely as a passing adventure. Otherwise I couldn't stand it." And when he talks like that it is my turn to writhe and his to triumph. But I never give him any peace till he has said again and again that he loves me and will love me forever. Oh, Heavens! I so hope there won't be any disillusion this time! I tell myself over and over again that he will be torn from me somehow or other, and that I won't think of the future—but it's no good; I can think of nothing but how dear he is to me, and how it will overwhelm me if I am deceived again.

November 23.

I WANTED to buy his picture—the one in the exhibition. But he declined most absolutely when I mentioned it. He is poor, I know, and I offered him any assistance. He told me that if I ever alluded to the subject again, all would be at an end between us. And it wasn't acting, for he was so excited and spoke with such tremendous determination that I simply didn't dare to say another word about it.

"But the portrait?" I said at last. "You can't prevent me from paying you for *that*?"

He looked at me ironically, and replied, "I can very easily prevent it. The portrait will remain in my own hands. I can always say that it isn't fin-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

ished, or that I'm not satisfied, and so am not yet ready to part with it."

How different from Egon!

December 16.

STIFTER now has the effrontery to take me to task. She came in lately with, "I wish to intimate to your Royal Highness that Herr Rogger must make haste with your portrait. These visits to the studio must come to an end."

"I wish to intimate to *you*, dear Baroness," I replied, "that you are overstepping your province. You are here solely and wholly to spy and to steal; but not to forbid me anything."

"Your Royal Highness is mistaken. I have authority from his Majesty to interfere personally, if necessary."

I told her that she could do what she liked and go to the devil. But I am in a terrible state of mind, for the creature is quite capable of destroying me utterly.

We must be careful. Richard has been foaming with rage ever since I recounted the scene to him. "Ah! if you really had a bit of spirit in you," he says, "if you really had pluck and pride, you couldn't exist in such an atmosphere, you couldn't so demean yourself as to go on living in that environment. If you weren't the offshoot of a worn-out, effete family, you'd get up one of these fine mornings, like a real human being, and away with

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

you! You'd try to be a woman, like a thousand other women—free and happy!"

Richard forgets my children. But oh! how delightful is the prospect he depicts for me! I asked him if he would be prepared to go with me and dare all.

"If you can set yourself free," he answered; "if you really are high-spirited enough to take such a step—nothing in the world could move me from your side!"

December 20.

WHAT a delightful Christmas we shall have! I tremble at the thought of what may happen at any moment. . . . Early to-day a frightful scene with Stifter. She had got hold of a letter from Richard to me, had opened it and read it, and then came in and said to me, "I wish just to tell you that this time I have not 'overstepped my province.' I have 'stolen' a letter from your lover, and since you do not wish for my personal interference, I sent the interesting document at once to his Majesty."

I reeled before this blow. But then my misery and fury overcame me.

"Do you think I'm afraid?" I cried. "You've only cut your own throat. I know you through and through, and I'll unmask you. I'll tell the King myself that your precious nephew was my lover—and that it was *you* who brought us together. . . ."

"If you imagine that anyone will believe you, by

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

all means attempt that infamy," answered Stifter.

"I shall be believed, you may depend upon it," I cried, without taking any notice of her boundless insolence. "I have the proofs here in my writing table. I have the proofs that Mr. Egon, your nephew, was my lover. I have the proofs that you knew it, and kept it a secret from the King so as to save your dear nephew's career. I'll prove that the whole affair was your work! Oh, so cleverly thought out, Baroness Stifter! I was to pay your rascally nephew's debts, I was to set him up again; and when *that* was done, you were to find out the whole thing, weren't you? and have me more than ever in your dirty hands!"

Stifter winced at my words as if they had been whips. And I believe if she hadn't already sent the letter to the King she'd have given anything to undo what she had done. But she could do nothing, as it was, except grin idiotically at me and disappear.

But God! God! what use is this victory to me, if I am to lose the only man I love, the only man I hold to be honest and true? What is to become of me?"

Later.

I HAVE been with Richard, and we were both happier than we have even been before. I told him what had occurred, and he said he thought my speech to Stifter was simply splendid.

"So you *have* something in you," he opined;

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

“and that something is an old traditional inheritance—the long-cultivated art of getting the better of others!”

Then we talked of all the possible things we might do. He spurred up my rebellious spirit, he comforted me, too, and I felt for the first time what it means to have all one's troubles taken off one's shoulders by the man one loves. He never thought of any disagreeables that *he* might come in for. And when I mentioned them he only smiled and said, “I'm independent. They can't do *me* any harm. And I don't care two pence for anything that the great ones of the earth might possibly have done to advance me!”

What a different attitude and language from that of my dear friend Rod! *He* crawled away at once, so soon as there was the smallest risk. And I was so carried away by Richard's demeanor that I forgot everything else, and just enjoyed the bliss of calling such a man my own. I fear nothing but actual physical force, and must only hope that they will not go so far as to use that. But I am frightened by Ginsterbach, of the madhouse where Oscar is languishing now—of the madhouse where they could annihilate me, not only now, but for all time—as Queen and Mother.

December 21.

ALREADY the King has dealt me a heavy blow. To-day, Trisburg got orders to pack her trunks forthwith and to leave the country within three

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

hours. She came rushing to my bedside very early in the morning with these tidings, overwhelmed with fright and grief. But what could we do except embrace each other, and cry and mutually pity? Certainly I did make an effort to keep Trisburg, but I knew beforehand that it would be in vain. Count Quast—whom I sent for, and to whom I said that Trisburg could only be dismissed by me, and was under my sole personal jurisdiction—answered very curtly that that arrangement was null and void, since Trisburg had committed a misdemeanor, and the King wished to rid himself of her. “I beg your Royal Highness to understand,” said old Quast, “that Fräulein von Trisburg is not only dismissed from her office, but is banished from the country.”

My husband’s behavior in this affair is remarkable. He is so embarrassed, that he never speaks of it, although I can see very plainly that he knows all about it; but I have an idea that he is ashamed. I should have expected any attitude sooner than that, and it oppresses me more than if he had shown violence towards me.

The King sends to say he will be with me in the evening. What now awaits me?

December 22.

THE King did not come to me. It may be that the good God has decided to save me—once and forever to save me. In the late afternoon of yesterday the King fell down in his room, was un-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

conscious for two hours, and now lies seriously ill. Who knows how long this illness may keep him prisoner, and in the meantime this affair will have become ancient history? A monstrous load of care seems to be lifted from my breast. I breathe freely again. I could pray and cry and shout for joy all at once. Trisburg departed yesterday afternoon, and I felt the parting from her dreadfully. But what should I be feeling like to-day if God had not taken me under his care? Perhaps this cup will pass from me; perhaps it is decided that Richard is to be forever mine. I went to him in the afternoon; I came back; nobody noticed me, nobody hindered me. Richard received me laughing, and said that Destiny was obviously taking us under her protection.

"Destiny?" I asked him.

"Yes—Destiny!" He hates to say "God"—but I made him.

Here at Court everybody is going about on tip-toe. The whole Castle is as silent as the grave, and in the courtyard the straw is heaped so high that one cannot hear the sound of a wheel. The guard does not turn out, and there is no drumming.

December 24.

WHAT a quiet Christmas! The King falls from one swoon into another, and the doctors consider his condition very grave. There is to be only a very quiet present giving, without candles or a

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tree—just for the servants. I was with Richard in the afternoon and took him a ring—a little plain hoop, with a small stone. When I gave it to him he got quite red, and drew from his pocket a little case—a ring, too!—which he had intended for me. I was enchanted, and when we were exchanging the rings he thrilled me by whispering, “Our wedding!” I instantly took off all my other rings, and I’ll never wear any of them again.

December 28.

THE King has been given the Communion for the Dying. The doctors have given him up. It may be over at any moment. The next minute may make me Queen of Menteburg! My whole being longs for that instant. I am all suspense, I tremble when I think of it; I go about with but one prayer on my lips, “Oh, God, let it happen! Oh God, it is my only way of escape!”

All of a sudden I am found to exist again. They all come, tumbling over one another’s heels. Oscar has sent me a telegram; Count Quast has waited on me; every possible General, Minister and military big-wig sends in his name—and so does even Stifter!

Yes—the sweet Stifter trots after me, grins her pinched-up grin at me, and knows not how to be deferential, anxious, and sycophantic enough. Johann comes to me, quite forgets that I am a faithless wife and have a lover, but hurries up and

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

down the room in great excitement, listens at the door to hear if someone is coming who will address him as "Your Majesty"—and to-day he said to me, three times, quite without connection, "You're enormously popular with the people; you're enormously popular." . . .

December 30.

THE King is done for. Yesterday the doctors described his state as "critical" in their bulletin, and told Johann that he was past human help. I am Queen. I can see, even in these few days, how changed my whole life will be, how much freer and easier and better in every way I shall become when this oppression no longer weighs upon me; when Johann is King he won't vex me any more. He will always have some respect for me, and we shall get on much better.

Oh, my God! but it came at the right moment!

That Stifter is really the most ridiculous beast I ever came across. To-day she invented something quite new by way of ingratiating herself with me. In she comes and announces that "the Crown Prince" is asking for me. And when I said, "My husband can surely come to me, if he wants me," she blurted out that she "meant the baby;" and then behaved as if she had only just made a mistake, as if I were already Queen, and Ulric Crown Prince. How tactless and how coarse!

I go to Richard every day. Go, quite unconcernedly, under Stifter's very eyes, down the little staircase to the Private Entry, veiled—and she

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

knows where I'm going, and opens the door for me. She knows, when I come back, where I've been, and behaves as if she were blind, and deaf, and dumb.

January 26.

THE King took nourishment to-day for the first time. He will not die, he will soon be well, and all my woes will begin again. However it may turn out, I won't grumble. The last blow that was aimed at me has been turned aside, anyhow; and even if it does reach me it will be far less heavy, it will not fall so crushingly upon me. Richard says that when a person rises, as it were, from the dead, he is usually gentle-hearted. "The King will punish you, but he will punish you mildly."

February 3.

THE King drove out again, and was received with acclamations. I hear that he is in a kindly mood, and so I hope for favor. Johann has never yet said one single word about that affair. He behaves as if it did not exist for him. It may be all right for me.

All the members of the family are to go to-morrow to the King to congratulate him on his recovery. And the day after, there is to be a solemn *Te Deum* in the Cathedral, and the Heads of the Departments are to be present. But to-day Count Quast intimated to me that the King was

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

not willing to receive me. So that I shall only be present at the Thanksgiving Service for his restoration to health.

February 10.

OSCAR has arrived in Ebenstadt. The King has decided to consider him from henceforth sane, and has taken him back into favor. It seems that the dear Oscar is now become a pattern of everything that the King desires. And I see the most certain proof of it in the fact that he has avoided coming to see me. He has paid the usual round of visits, has been to all the Ministers, everywhere, in fact; but to me has not been. I congratulate him. He is sure to get on all right now.

For myself I have no hopes; for it seems that the "King's grace" has stopped at Oscar, and that he means to pursue me with greater hostility than ever. I could see that very plainly at the *Te Deum* in the Cathedral, when he cut me so markedly once more. He looks terribly pale, and gloomier than ever, and is frightfully aged. I have often been afraid of him, but now he fills me with horror.

February 15.

STIFTER goes about looking mysterious and detestable, and is evidently hatching some plot. I expect daily to be summoned by the King, or to get a message from him to indicate my fate. But it seems as if he wanted to gather fresh strength

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

before attacking me again. Johann, too, is depressed, and I think he must have got a hint of what is impending, and so doesn't dare to speak to me about anything that is going on. I hear that Stifter lately let fall this remark: "There's a vacant room at Ginsterbach now." So once more I live in that terrible apprehension which always comes over me when I don't know what perils lie ahead.

Richard comforts me, and thinks that as nothing has as yet been said, the truth is that they don't know exactly what to do with me. But he doesn't understand our circles, and when he says, "But what on earth can they do to you?" I perceive that he has no conception of the danger in which I stand. He forgets that I am not as he is, and cannot say, like other people, "What on earth can the King do to *me*?" Everybody is better off than we are. Everybody else lives a free life and can defend himself. It is only we who are entirely defenceless and have to submit to any sort of treatment from the King. And Richard doesn't know, either, how clever they are at punishments in our sphere, and how wonderfully subtle their talent for retaliation can be.

February 20.

THE blow has fallen! It is worse than I had dreamed, and I am simply a broken woman. Yesterday evening (I don't know what made me do it; it was plainly a case of second sight) I came out of my bedroom again to go to my boudoir. I felt so restless and worried, as if I'd forgotten something there. As I gently opened the door, there was Stifter standing before my writing table. . . . All the drawers were pulled out, and I saw her bending over this Diary, reading it avidly. With one spring I was upon her, and she started so that I really thought she would faint. But she got herself in hand again immediately, and turned to face me. "Go to your room, your Royal Highness," she ordered me. "These papers are seized in the King's name!"

I was wild with fury. "My Diary! Give me my Diary this instant!" I cried breathlessly, almost voicelessly. It was as if I were strangling. She put her hand upon the book, and made as if to offer resistance. But in the twinkling of an eye I had seized her, and then— Good God! what a joy it was to be at last, at last, since nothing mat-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

tered now—at last able to let my fury have full sway—oh! I took her by the throat, and I boxed her ears with the gold old Kressnitz box that I had learnt from my mother. “*Canaille!*” I shrieked at her, “wretched *canaille!*” with that I flung her aside and caught up the book. She tried to drag it away from me, but I pushed the wretched skeleton creature off so that she staggered, and then I escaped to my bedroom with my treasure. All the letters I left her as her prey. She ought to be satisfied! There are letters from Rodl, there are letters from Egon Schwedenberg—but those she will certainly suppress!—and there are all the letters that Richard has written me up to the last few days.

Quite exhausted, incapable of thought, I have now got through a couple of hours. The morning is breaking, the day will soon be here which is to annihilate me. What will happen? . . .

This much is clear: *they have made up their minds to destroy me.* The one letter that Stifter got hold of was not enough for them. They wanted proofs sufficient to crush me utterly. And that wretched creature was not acting on her own initiative. She had authority to break open my private desk. The King will uphold her, for she is his tool; and after what passed between us last night she will not be content with an easy vengeance. I have struck her in the face; she will want to have her heel on my neck. And it is clear to me that the King wants no mere punishment;

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

no! he wants more; he wants revenge; he wants to make me powerless forever.

My back is aching; my limbs are like lead, so heavy and so numb; I cannot even cry any more.

Afternoon.

I AM left absolutely alone. Stifter has not shown herself up to now, and when I asked, they told me she had been in the King's Cabinet the whole day.

I asked for the children, and was told that they were with the Queen. These are big preparations; these are mysteries indeed! But I am at the end of my strength; and, long before the blow falls, I shall have succumbed to it.

Two Hours Later.

HONEST old Andreas, our body-servant, has been playing the spy for me. The servants are the only beings who have any sympathy for me. All day they have been going about, looking at me with compassionate eyes. And now old Andreas has taken pity, and gone into the other wing, where the King lives, to find out what is going on. They are having a family council there. God knows what they are deciding to do. They're all there. The King and Queen, Eric and Mathilde, my husband too—even Oscar was summoned. I should be interested in hearing what Oscar's ver-

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

dict is—he, to whom I have shown nothing but kindness; he, who has clasped me in his arms. . .

.

11 o'clock, p. m.

THE decision is made. It is I who have made it. I *myself* will put an end to this torture. God knows how long they would have kept me agonizing here, in all the torment of suspense, before they made up their minds to dispatch their victim.

I went to Richard. In the late afternoon I fled there, hastily and secretly, under the protection of old Andreas, who let me slip off, and who will also help me to carry out my great decision.

Richard said to me, decisively, the moment I came in, "There's only one thing to be done; and that's to get off at once!" I was staggered by it—for I shall be forsaking my children, forsaking the only things I have on earth, those three little angels that I have carried under my heart, who have the blood of my blood in their veins, and of whom I cannot think without profound emotion. But Richard has shown me clearly what is hanging over me. They will put me in a madhouse and treat me as a prisoner, and that way too I shall lose my children, and how much more grievously! I have to choose between being thrust, sane, into a madhouse, or carving out my own path to freedom and liberty. Whichever way it is I must lose my children; for they certainly won't leave me

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

those treasures; they will be glad to torture me by taking my babies from me. So the only question is whether I am to let them get me into their power or not. And they shall not! They shall not have me! This King shall not conquer me, shall not tread me under foot.

My few jewels, and my money (such as it is), I have collected in a little, little bag, which I shall take with me—a tinier bag than any chamber-maid would carry with her from the Castle! And so I shall leave this house—leave it for bare life—leave this house, this town, this land, in which I have been Crown Princess . . .

Who knows! Perhaps they will recoil before the last extremities. Who knows! They may even parley with me again, when once I am over the border, or in a foreign country, where my lips are no longer sealed; and they *must* fear my speaking out! If I stay here I have simply no hope at all. If I go I have just this one chance, this only chance—their fear of scandal. No! there's one more! If they give me up, if they really let me go, entirely—a free existence with the man I love, and who loves me! Perhaps then I shall be able to forget that I have been tortured and dishonored here; and perhaps, too, I shall forget that I once was to have been Queen in Menteburg.

.

I'm sorry for Johann. He will have the worst

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

of it, and will perhaps be the only one who will miss me.

But now, *now* I must not yield to any soft emotion. This very night, or in the dawn of to-morrow, I may be dragged from my bed by the King's emissaries, to be thrust into some prison or madhouse. No hesitation, no vacillation can avail me. Richard is waiting for me in a carriage two streets away. We shall drive out past a couple of stations; then we shall take the night train that passes through here. We shall not be seen, while the passengers are asleep; and when it is day, and they come to look for me here, I shall be safely over the border!

My parents . . . my children . . . but I must stop. This Diary is the last thing I shall put up to take with me. I shall close it and put it in my bag with the few other things that I can call my own. And I feel as if I had saved the better part of Myself when I saved my Diary from the hands of that creature. It has been my truest friend in all the years that I have spent here. Nobody else has stuck to me—except, indeed, old Andreas, who is to help me now, down by the Kunigunde staircase, and through the secret entry (of which he has the keys at night) into Freedom. The only man, in all this Royal Palace, who has done me a true and disinterested service—and he's a lackey! And the only one whom I shall remember gratefully.

What will become of me? Shall I peradventure

CONFESSIONS OF A PRINCESS

sink lower and lower, until I learn new griefs, new sufferings? And yet I am of Royal blood, and I feel that the greatness of my birth, the lustre of my descent, can never wholly leave me, wherever the sea of life may toss and drive me. Nor am I a bad woman—no! Even at this moment, when I am losing all, I cannot think, *cannot* persuade myself that I am wholly to blame. We are human beings, though we may be “Royal Highnesses” and “Majesties”—No more! . . . Old Andreas comes in, and I have not a moment to lose. . . .

THE END.

52 024 048

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

